FRONTISPIECE to the REV?D Mr SCOTT'S FAMILY BIBLE.

Religion receiving the immediate light of heaven tramples on the Symbols of Superstition and Idolatry.

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THE

HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING THE

Old and New Testaments;

WITH

ORIGINAL NOTES,

AND

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

BY THE

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TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A CONCORDANCE, GENERAL INDEX, AND TABLES.

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PREFACE.

WHOEVER ſeriouſly reflects upon the powers and capacities of the human mind, regarding them as the work of him who doeth nothing in vain, and compares them with thoſe of the inferior creatures; will readily perceive that man alone was created to be religious. Of all the inhabitants of the earth, none elſe are capable of receiving any knowledge of their Creator, or of rendering him any worſhip and praiſe: Man alone poſſeſſes the capacity of diſtinguiſhing betwixt Truth and Falſhood; betwixt moral good and evil; and of being inſtructed in ſocial and relative duties, with the obligations which he lies under to perform them, and the advantages of ſo doing: He alone is capable of being governed by a law, and of underſtanding and being influenced by the propoſal of rewards and puniſhments; of acting under the eye of an inviſible obſerver, and with reference to the future ſeaſon of retribution. From theſe premiſes we infer, with abſolute certainty, that the all-wiſe Creator thus conſtituted our minds, and conferred upon us theſe diſtinguiſhing powers, in order to render us capable of Religion, for the purpoſes of his own glory, and our felicity.

When further we conſider what this word Religion implies; and define it, in it's moſt general acceptation, to be ſuch an habitual regard to the one, true, living, and eternal God, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all, as influences us to ſeek his favour, do his will, and aim at his glory, in the temper of our hearts, and the regulation of our actions, both in the worſhip we render to him, and the duties we perform to man for his ſake, and according to his will: we ſhall be conſtrained to allow, that Religion is the moſt reaſonable and excellent thing in the world.—Doubtleſs the exerciſes of true devotion form the nobleſt effort of the human mind, which in them emulates the angelic nature: This conſcientious regard to the all-ſeeing eye of a righteous and

omnipotent Judge, is the beſt bond of human ſociety, and regulator of our relative conduct: and were this principle of action univerſal and complete, human laws and tribunals would be entirely unneceſſary. This would alſo moſt effectually moderate our appetites and paſſions, and produce the greateſt poſſible proportion of peace, contentment, and felicity, perſonal and ſocial, of which our nature in its preſent ſtate is capable. And when we look forwards beyond the grave, to that immortality and future world of recompence, which Reaſon itſelf pronounces at leaſt highly probable; the abſolute neceſſity of Religion to our felicity in that eternal ſtate appears ſelf-evident.

Hence with certainty we alſo determine that Religion is that great buſineſs, to which all men ſhould attend; and that bleſſing, after which all men ſhould ſeek, whatever elſe is neglected, or ſuperſeded.

But tho' it be demonſtrable that man is capable of religion, and in duty and intereſt bound thereto; yet when we come to facts, we muſt conclude, that, left to himſelf, he would never be religious.—According to the general definition above given, where ſhall we find religion upon earth, in any age or nation, which hath not poſſeſſed in a greater or leſſer degree the advantage of thoſe writings, which we will now take for granted, and hereafter prove to be, a divine Revelation?—An aſſemblage of the wildeſt abſurdities in opinion, the moſt ſtupid ſuperſtitions in worſhip, and the moſt dangerous miſtakes, as well as the moſt abandoned licentiouſneſs in morals, forms that Religion, (if it may be dignified by ſo venerable a name,) which forces itſelf upon our obſervation, wherever the light of revelation hath not ſhone. And we cannot ſo much as except one nation, or one city, or ſcarce one family from this general rule. If there have been a few individuals, who have manifeſted ſomewhat not totally diſſimilar from true religion; and we are diſpoſed to allow, that indeed it was ſuch: it would be more rational to aſcribe it to the remains of original tradition, or even to a perſonal revelation afforded them for their own benefit, tho' not authenticated for the good of others; than to make it an exception from the general rule, that without revelation, there never was on earth, ſince Adam's fall, any true religion.

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Men indeed living under the light of revelation, and making what uſe they chooſe of that light, may draw up ſyſtems of natural religion plauſible enough, and apparently very rational. But it ſhould be remembered, that it is all borrowed originally from the Bible, tho' with equal abſurdity and ingratitude, ſet up in oppoſition to it's ſacred and ſublime truths: and univerſal experience demonſtrates that no ſuch natural religion ever was diſcovered, and delineated by men, who had never ſeen any part of the Bible, or any thing deduced from that ſource.

However reaſonable and excellent many of thoſe truths and precepts are, which are propoſed to us as the oracles of reaſon; not one of them ever was diſcovered and propoſed by Reaſon alone, with ſuch certainty, clearneſs, and authority, as to become a conſtant principle and rule of action, in ſecret, and in public, towards God, and towards man.

Indeed, after all the ſuppoſed improvements and diſcoveries of modern times, if we reject the *peculiar Doctrines of the Bible*, what darkneſs and uncertainty reſt upon points the moſt important?—Even in reſpect of the immortality of the ſoul, when Reaſon, at her beſt advantage, has done her utmoſt; her boaſted power of *Demonſtration* fails: much more in uncertainty does ſhe leave us about the nature of the future world, and the rule of judgment, with which our whole conduct, and our hope and peace are ſo connected. The conſiſtency of perfect juſtice with boundleſs mercy is hard, if not impoſſible by her light, to be perceived: it ſtill remains dubious whether God will puniſh at all, or pardon at all; or by what rules he means to puniſh, or pardon: and indeed a thick cloud veils our underſtandings, and diſcourages our enquiries, wherever we turn, if we leave the light of God's teſtimony, to bewilder ourſelves in ſpeculations about matters evidently beyond our reach. How much worſe hath it been with almoſt all the nations of the earth, and generations of men? and ſo far have men been from advancing in religious knowledge, where revelation hath not been afforded; that ſuch nations evidently ſeem to have ſunk deeper and deeper into ignorance, and ſeveral of them almoſt into abſolute Atheiſm: as if the little glimmering that ſhone amongſt them, was the effect of original tradition; which gradually expiring, hath left them in utter darkneſs.

But the moſt complete information of truths, and duties, would be inadequate to the production of the deſired effect; except ſuch information was enforced by ſufficient authority, gave neceſſary encouragement, and propoſed effectual aſſiſtance. The diſcovery of our duty, and of it's reaſonableneſs is utterly unavailing, whilſt we are under the dominion of our head-ſtrong luſts and paſſions. There is in that caſe no diſpoſition in the mind to perform the dictates even of our own conſcience. A Heathen could ſay; *Video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor.* The propoſal of virtue as amiable, and excellent, with the feeble recommendation of the moraliſt's pen, is vaſtly inferior in it's energy, to the authoritative command and ſanction of the Almighty, denouncing his awful diſpleaſure againſt the tranſgreſſor: And yet matter of fact undeniably ſhews, that men venture upon ſin, even with the threatenings of everlaſting miſery ſounding in their ears; nay, with the trembling apprehenſions of it diſmaying their hearts: for divine as well as human laws are weak thro' the fleſh, and with all their ſanctions and barriers, are unable to affix boundaries to the ſwelling torrent of human depravity.

Indeed, were men fully acquainted with the whole character and law of God; with the nature and malignity of ſin; with their own real character and ſituation as ſinners; and with the rule and conſequences of the future judgment: and were they left at the ſame time, utterly deſtitute of the encouragements and aſſiſtances which the Goſpel propoſes, and which form the grand peculiarity of the Bible: This their knowledge, ſo far from rendering them religious, would probably, by leaving them without hope, annihilate all appearances of religion: wherever ſuch appearances are found, which have no reſpect to the mediation of Chriſt, and the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit; they have their foundation, not in men's knowledge, but in their ignorance of God, and of themſelves, of his law, and of the evil of ſin; as might eaſily be evinced even upon rational principles.

But the propoſal of ſuch encouragements, and ſuch aſſiſtance is entirely out of the province of reaſon: theſe are heavenly things, of which we can know nothing but by revelation from God, and of which we can have no aſſurance but his expreſs declaration,

and faithful promiſe. He alone can inform us upon what terms, or in what manner, his honour permits him, and his ſovereign pleaſure diſpoſes him, to forgive his offending creatures; and to communicate thoſe gracious influences, which may produce a holy diſpoſition of heart, and enable them to overcome all thoſe obſtacles, which retard their progreſs, who eſſay to lead a ſober, righteous, and godly life.

From ſuch conſiderations, the neceſſity of a revelation from God may be inferred; and it might reaſonably have been expected, that he would afford ſuch a revelation, if he intended to accept of any worſhip and ſervice from fallen man. Indeed this expectation hath been very general in the world. And as counterfeit coin proves the exiſtence of ſterling money, and the value men put upon it; ſo counterfeit revelations, (inſtead of invalidating the argument;) if they do not prove the exiſtence of a real revelation, yet evince that men felt their need of one, were ſenſible that it would be a moſt valuable acquiſition, and were generally diſpoſed to expect one.

Each of theſe pretended revelations have, one after another, been expoſed, and ſunk into general contempt: and, I believe, that in this age and nation, it may be aſſerted without hazard of contradiction, that there is but one book in the world, that ſo much as appears to be of divine original. This we call the Bible, that is, by way of eminence, the Book: And ſuch is the internal and external evidence, which authenticates it's claim; that I am perſuaded, were men as open to conviction in this matter, as they are in a mathematical proceſs, they could no more, after examination, reject it, than they could contradict an evident demonſtration.

It may, therefore, not be improper to inſert in this place a few of the moſt obvious reaſons, which the more ſtudious Chriſtian is ready to render of that hope, which is in him; grounded upon this firſt principle, that the Bible is the word of God. In order to ſhew that tho' faith and reaſon are diſtinct from, yet they are not contrary to each other; but that it is very reaſonable to believe the Bible to be a divine revelation; and if ſo, then equally reaſonable to take all our meaſures of truth and duty from it; and to bow our underſtandings, and inclinations to it's teaching and governing.

I. Then

I. Then I confeſs it has ſome weight with me, that ſuch numbers of the wiſeſt and beſt of men, in ſo many countries, and during ſo many generations; many of them perſons of peculiar ſerioufneſs, deep penetration, eminent erudition, and acknowledged impartiality in judging of men, and things, have concurred in receiving this Book as the word of God; and have made it the rule of their conduct, the ſtandard of their faith, the foundation of their hope, and the ſource of their comfort, living and dying: and have left the world bearing teſtimony to it's divine excellency, and recommending it to thoſe dear friends, whom they left behind, as the richeſt of all treaſures.—Comparing theſe perſons, in their characters, lives, and deaths, with thoſe who have oppoſed, or neglected the Bible; I cannot but conceive, that a perfectly impartial being, poſſeſſed of ſound judgment and an holy diſpoſition of heart, having this ſtriking contraſt repreſented to him, would open the Bible with profound veneration, and a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion.

II. The miracles recorded in the Scriptures form, even to us, at this diſtance of time and place, a powerful argument in proof of their divine authority. The hiſtories of theſe miracles may be proved to have been publiſhed in the very ages and countries, in which they are declared to have been wrought, in the preſence of numerous witneſſes, enemies as well as friends to the cauſe, in ſupport of which they were performed. A public challenge was thereby given to all men, to contradict or diſprove them, if they are able: but none of thoſe, whoſe reputation, intereſt, and authority moſt required it; and who wanted neither inclination nor opportunity, ever ventured to give them a full inveſtigation. Conſcious that they could not diſprove the facts, they either waved the queſtion, or aſcribed them to cauſes evidently falſe and ridiculous.

As a ſpecimen of what might be urged, in good meaſure at leaſt, in behalf of the other miracles, were not brevity to be conſulted; let us examine into that capital miracle, the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, after his embittered enemies were ſatisfied of his being really dead. For this one event, once eſtabliſhed, proves beyond diſpute the whole Bible to be a divine revelation; his authority and doctrine eſtabliſhes the Old Teſtament; and the witneſſes of his reſurrection either penned, or ſanctioned, every part of the New Teſtament.

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In order to prepare men's minds to expect, and notice this event, which was intended to be the grand external evidence of the truth of chriſtianity; in addition to the Old Teſtament prophecies, Jeſus himſelf, publicly, and repeatedly predicted it, with the very time, when it would take place: theſe predictions his enemies, the Jewiſh rulers, noticed; and they employed their utmoſt addreſs and power to prevent any poſſible impoſition in the caſe:—yet, notwithſtanding all their precautions, his body was gone; and neither the ſoldiers, who guarded the ſepulchre, nor themſelves, could give any rational account how, nor whither: unleſs they confirmed, or allowed the teſtimony of his diſciples, who declared that he was riſen from the dead. According to the allowance of all civilized nations, two witneſſes of unimpeached characters and underſtandings are ſufficient, even in caſes of life and death, to prove any fact, of which they declare themſelves to have been ſpectators, and concerning which they are competent judges: and by the ſame allowance, men are ſuppoſed competent to diſtinguiſh with certainty one man from all others, and to prove the identity of his perſon; not only upon long and intimate acquaintance, but even upon a ſingle, tranſient, and often confuſed ſight of him.—Now, in this caſe, here were twelve perſons of good character, plain ſenſe, ſober minds, and ordinary education, that had been the intimate companions of Jeſus Chriſt for ſeveral years, who unanimouſly declared that they frequently ſaw, converſed, eat and drank with him, after his crucifixion and reſurrection from the dead; that they had every evidence they could deſire, and were perfectly aſſured that it was he; and that at the end of forty days, he viſibly aſcended from amongſt them, till a cloud received him, and they ſaw him no more; but were aſſured by a viſion of angels, that he was gone into heaven, and ſat down on the right hand of God. Contrary to their moſt manifeſt temporal intereſts, at the expence of renouncing every earthly comfort, and of embracing labours, ſufferings, contempt, and reproach, as their portion; avowedly expecting, and actually experiencing much the ſame treatment as their maſter had met with; expoſed to the oppoſition of all the learning, wealth, and authority of the world, yet unawed by all the terrors of their indignant perſecutors, they perſiſted in this teſtimony unto the end, and cloſed their holy lives, and chearful ſufferings, moſt, if not all of them, by joyfully ſealing it with their blood.

It is doubtful whether any other matter of fact was ever proved by ſuch undeniable evidence: and tho' the reſurrection of a dead perſon to life be an extraordinary event; yet we know that 'tis neither impoſſible, nor difficult to almighty power: and when a ſufficient cauſe requires it, why ſhould it be deemed incredible by us, that God ſhould exert that almighty power?—And to ſtamp, with a ſeal of heaven, a revelation, which is the baſis of all true religion, and which immediately tends to his own glory, and the everlaſting ſalvation of mankind is—the moſt important reaſon for a divine interpoſition that can poſſibly be conceived.

But even this teſtimony forms only a comparatively ſmall part of the whole evidence of the reſurrection. Five hundred brethren ſaw the riſen Jeſus at one time, and bare record thereto. Saul, the perſecutor, beheld him likewiſe, became his diſciple and apoſtle, ſpent his life in teſtifying of him, and ſealed that teſtimony by his death.—Nay, the primitive moſt malicious and cruel oppoſers of Chriſtianity, not attempting to confute the teſtimony of thoſe whoſe blood they ſhed, united their reluctant evidence, that Jeſus was indeed riſen, and they could not deny it. Moreover, the Apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the Goſpel, publicly averred that God confirmed this their teſtimony by the miracles which he enabled them to perform, and by the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, with which he abundantly endued them: and that by laying on of hands theſe ſame powers were communicated to others; who openly exerciſing them in many wonderful works, in the name of the riſen Jeſus, formed an increaſing multitude of unexceptionable witneſſes: nor was this ever contradicted by any of their oppoſers; tho' it was an appeal to facts ſo numerous, public, and notorious.—Finally, the effects of the Apoſtles preaching, though unarmed, unlettered, and obſcure, and every where oppoſed and ſpoken againſt, cloſes this multiplied demonſtration. Not only were tens of thouſands brought to embrace the humbling, holy, and perſecuted religion of Jeſus; but the deep-rooted foundations of pagan ſuperſtition, as well as of the Moſaic ceremonial, were ſpeedily undermined, and within about 300 years, the ſurpriſing ſpread of chriſtianity effected revolutions in the civil, as well as religious ſtate of the then known world; the effects whereof remain to this day, along with that religion whoſe ſucceſs occaſioned them. With a trifling alteration we may quote the words of a cautious oppoſer of chriſtianity, and ſay, "If it had been of man,

"it

" it would have come to nought: but as it was of God it could not be overturned; and " they, who oppoſed it, found it in vain to fight againſt God."

III. Let us next advert to the prophecies of Scripture. Thoſe prophecies, which have had their accompliſhment many ages ago, form a proof ſomewhat ſimilar to that of the miracles, which we have been conſidering. But thoſe, which are fulfilling before our eyes continually, are, if attentively obſerved, equivalent to a ſucceſſion of miracles performed in every age and nation—Let any man candidly and carefully examine the prophecies of the Scriptures, eſpecially thoſe of the New Teſtament, concerning the unbelief, rejection, and diſperſion of the Jewiſh nation; concerning the deſolations of Jeruſalem, and it's being trodden under foot of the Gentiles; and concerning the future calling of that people into the church, which implies their being preſerved ſeparate from other nations: let him then compare theſe prophecies with the paſt and preſent ſtate of the Jews, diſperſed amongſt, deſpiſed by, and yet preſerved diſtinct from other people: and then let him aſk, Is not here a *demonſtration* that this book, containing theſe prophecies of ſuch diſtant and improbable events, was inſpired by that God who knows the end from the beginning?

Afterwards let him proceed to examine thoſe prophecies of the New Teſtament, which foretel the corruption of Chriſtianity by it's profeſſors; and compare them with the various abuſes of the Goſpel, which prevail in every age and nation: eſpecially let him compare the predictions of the coming, the character, and the abominations of Antichriſt, that man of ſin, and of the myſtical Babylon, &c; (See 2 Theſ. c. ii. 1 Tim. c. iii. v. 1—3. Rev. c. xi—xiii—xvii;) with that ſyſtem of idolatry, ſuperſtition, tyranny, and perſecution, the Roman hierarchy, which forbids to marry, and commands to abſtain from meats, and moſt minutely anſwers the deſcription of thoſe Scriptures: and he will find that even theſe lamentable abuſes ſhall turn unto him for a teſtimony; and ſo will no longer be ſtumbled, by finding that the worſt abominations have been grafted upon the Chriſtian religion; when he diſcovers that thus it is written, and thus, in the myſtery of God's providence, Satan was to be permitted to practiſe and proſper for a ſeaſon.

Finally,

Finally, let a man well conſider what the Scriptures foretel of the oppoſition, which the gates of hell, with all their power and policy, would make to the ſpread of the Goſpel, and their efforts for it's deſtruction; and of the continuance and prevalency of the religion of Chriſt, in defiance of all: let him alſo well attend to the character of the true chriſtian, and the treatment with which he was in all ages and countries to meet; then let him look around him, and ſee whether there are not ſtill ſuch perſons amongſt us who meet with ſuch treatment? And whether true Chriſtianity does not ſtill defy the gates of hell, and, like the burning buſh, continue unconſumed in the midſt of the flames of perſecution, and every ſpecies of oppoſition? All theſe prophecies, and their accompliſhments, are of the nature of miracles, an evident interpoſition of God to produce effects, which could not otherwiſe be produced; namely, the prediction of diſtant and future contingencies in vaſt variety, verified continually by the event: and this is a proof of the divine original of the Scripture, which it contains within itſelf, carries with it wherever it is ſent, and by which it ſhines, like the ſun, by its own light, and by its own beams proclaims its Author. And I am perſuaded that this argument will always prove more and more concluſive, in proportion to the diligence and attention with which it is inveſtigated.

IV. To this we may next ſubjoin the argument deduced from the nature of the Revelation itſelf.—There is no book extant upon earth, except the Bible, and thoſe books that make the Bible their baſis, which ſpeak in a ſatisfactory and rational manner of the Being, Perfections, and Government of God; which uniformly delineate his character, as compriſing all poſſible Excellency, without any mixture of imperfection, and record his whole conduct as conſiſtent with ſuch a character. The Bible alone introduces the Governor of the Univerſe, ſpeaking with that Majeſty, Simplicity, and Authority, which becomes him; and promulgating laws and ordinances, which are worthy of him. In this extraordinary book we meet with uſeful information upon the moſt important ſubjects; and a clear ſolution of the moſt perplexing difficulties. Here we have our only ſatisfactory account of the creation of the world; of the entrance of moral and natural evil; of the preſent ſtate of things, and of the otherwiſe inexplicable phenomena around us; and here we have our only comment upon that difficult book, God's Providential Govern-

ment of the world; and a plain revelation of the method in which ſin may be pardoned, and ſinners ſaved. 'Tis true the doctrines of the Scriptures are myſterious: but this is ſo far from invalidating the argument, that it exceedingly corroborates it.—A pretended revelation without myſteries, would confute itſelf: a work of God, which we, ignorant, ſhort-ſighted creatures can fully comprehend, involves a contradiction. The ſtyle of Deity is incomprehenſibility: from the creation of an atom, the formation of a mite, or the vegetation of a blade of graſs, to the nobleſt work of Almighty Power; all is to us myſterious, as to the mode of it's production and ſubſiſtence. Men, with proper information, may fully comprehend the moſt intricate devices of men like themſelves: but no inſtruction in this world afforded us, can enable us completely to underſtand the ſimpleſt of the works of God. Should a watch-maker therefore declare that God created his watch, immediately, and in it's preſent form, it would not be a more palpable impoſture, than a pretended revelation from God, devoid of myſtery.

But the myſteries of the Bible are ſublime, intereſting, and uſeful; they tend to diſplay the perfections and operations of God, are connected with our moſt important intereſts, and lay at the foundation of our hope and peace; they tend to excite our admiration, to promote our humility, love, and gratitude; to inſpire confidence, and to draw our minds from earth to heaven. They are, indeed, myſteries, but not abſurdities; they are above, not contrary to our reaſon; and are in part intelligible, tho' not to be wholly comprehended. For a myſtery may be defined to be a divine truth, which we never could have diſcovered, unleſs it had been revealed; and concerning which we can know nothing further, than is revealed: that which is declared unto us, we by faith apprehend, and, in ſome degree, underſtand; that which is not declared, remains in impenetrable darkneſs, notwithſtanding all our reaſonings and enquiries. The information, therefore, which is communicated by myſteries, is capable of being applied to the moſt important practical purpoſes; whilſt the very darkneſs, that ſtill reſts upon thoſe infinite and eternal things to which they relate, reminds us what we are, and where we are; and has a tendency to abate our pride, and to raiſe our expectation of thoſe glorious diſcoveries, which ſhall be made in that world, where we ſhall ſee face to face, and know, even as we are known. But to return from this digreſſion.

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The tendency of all the truths, and precepts of the Bible, evidently is, to lead men to the knowledge, love, worſhip, and ſervice of Almighty God; to render them humble, and heavenly; and to form their character, and direct their conduct unto every thing that is juſt, holy, ſincere, benevolent, peaceful, and uſeful. Every motive, encouragement, inſtruction, warning, and aſſiſtance are therein propoſed, which are conducive to godlineſs, righteouſneſs, temperance, and every good work.

It has been often obſerved, and it will bear repetition, becauſe it admits not of confutation; that an evil ſpirit could never tempt men to write ſuch a book as the Bible; for then Satan would be divided againſt himſelf: Wicked men could have no inducement to ſuch an undertaking, for they ſtand condemned by it, in every page, and could only thereby expoſe themſelves to the contempt and hatred of the world: and good men never would have invented ſuch a book, and then aſcribed it to divine inſpiration; when, in that book itſelf nothing is more ſeverely condemned than ſuch (not *pious*, but) impious frauds. But, indeed, the more accurately and impartially any man examines the Scriptures, the fuller will be his conviction, that they are a work, as far beyond all the powers of the human underſtanding, as the ſun exceeds thoſe illuminations, whereby men attempt to imitate his ſplendour, or ſupply his abſence.

Indeed, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither did it ever enter into man's heart to conceive, ſuch things as God hath revealed in his holy word; and it's contents as fully declare it's Author, as the heavens declare the glory of God their Creator; tho' both in one caſe; and the other, men not liking to retain God in their knowledge, do not chooſe to conſider, and are not willing to be convinced by any evidence.

V. The agreement, which is found amongſt the penmen of the Scriptures, forms another argument of their divine original. Should twenty men, all living in the ſame age and country, all partakers of the ſame education, and in the ſame ſituation and habits of living; yea, all ſubſcribing one common creed; concur in forming a book as large as the Bible, upon religious ſubjects; each ſingly contributing his quota, the attentive and accurate reader would be able to perceive

perceive a difference in opinion amongſt them, in ſeveral things, let them beſtow what pains they would to avoid it. This is evidently the caſe in the writings of modern divines: there are not two books to be found of different authors, upon theological ſubjects, wherein diſagreement, in ſome particulars, might not eaſily be pointed out; and the more they are ſtudied and compared, the plainer their diſagreement appears.—

But the penmen of the Scriptures, ſucceeding one another for the ſpace of above 1500 years; being perſons of different ranks in life, princes and peaſants, fiſhermen, &c: of different education, natural abilities, and modes of living: ſome writing hiſtory, ſome giving laws, others uttering prophecies, collecting proverbs, deviſing parables, compoſing poems, pouring out devotions, diſcuſſing doctrines, confuting errors, &c; all concur in ſo wonderful a manner, that the oppoſers of the Scriptures have never yet been able to prove any real diſagreement amongſt them. The more theſe writings are ſtudied and compared, the more evidently it will be perceived, that the penmen were all of one judgment, and aimed to eſtabliſh the ſame principles, and to draw the very ſame inferences: in ſuch inveſtigation every appearance of inconſiſtency, which as a ſnare catches the ſelf-ſufficient and prejudiced reader, will vaniſh from the humble, teachable, and attentive enquirer: And he will plainly ſee, that all of them give exactly the ſame view of the divine character, of human nature, of ſin, of holineſs, of the promiſed Saviour and Salvation, and of every ſubject upon which they had occaſion to touch.

VI. The effect produced by this book, in proportion as it hath been attended to, in all ages and nations, in turning men from ungodlineſs and idolatry to the worſhip and ſervice of the true God; and in that change produced in the moral character and conduct of tens of thouſands, who were otherwiſe irreclaimable, forms a moſt convincing proof that it is a revelation from God, and the inſtrument by which alone he works, in turning men from their iniquities.—But this argument hath been anticipated in ſome meaſure in the preceding part of this Preface. And ſhould any one preſume to object, that this light hath been withheld from ſo vaſt a proportion of the human race: it were

obvious to anſwer, that it is a benefit, which none can demand of God, as in juſtice due unto them, and therefore that he confers it as an unmerited favour, upon whom he will, for reaſons with which he hath not been pleaſed to acquaint us. Nor are we in temporal matters generally diſpoſed to undervalue, and refuſe to make uſe of the ſpecial advantages of our climate, or ſuperior ſtation in life, becauſe all the world does not ſhare them with us. And we may add, that if man had been diſpoſed to welcome this light, every nation upon Earth would long ſince have enjoyed it: And that nothing at this day ſtops its progreſs, but the indifference of men about it, the oppoſition they make to it, and the bad uſe which they make of it.

VII. There is in the word of God *brevity* connected with *fullneſs* to ſuch a degree, as there never was in any other book. It is indeed an inexhauſtible treaſure of divine knowledge. And whilſt thoſe things, which are immediately neceſſary to ſalvation, are ſo plain, that the moſt illiterate reader, or one of the meaneſt capacity, who has got faith ſimply to believe the teſtimony of God, and a diſpoſition to obey his will, may with very little ſtudy learn thence the way of ſafety, and the path of duty; there is alſo in it that depth of inſtruction, which the moſt learned, acute, and diligent ſtudent, can never in the longeſt life exhauſt; but the more he ſearches the Scriptures, the richer treaſure will he find; and he will feel, when death is about to cloſe his enquiries, that he hath not attained; nay, that what he hath thence learned is little, compared with that of which he ſtill is ignorant. Nor is this a feeble argument of their divine authority.

Laſtly, He that believeth, hath the witneſs in himſelf.

By the light of God's word, he hath made moſt intereſting diſcoveries reſpecting his own heart and character; as well as concerning heavenly things; and theſe diſcoveries have produced abiding effects upon his judgment, choice, diſpoſition, and conduct: he hath alſo, in anſwer to his prayers, had frequent experience of the truth of the promiſes contained in this bleſſed Book, and hath had earneſts and foretaſtes of heaven in communion with God in that way, which is therein revealed; theſe things put the matter with him beyond all doubt. This, this is the grand evidence, which alone ſuffices to the bulk of chriſtians.—The word of God, by it's authority and importance,

tance, arreſts their attention, and awakens their concern about eternal things: In the Goſpel they perceive a ſuitable remedy and refuge for their ſouls. They ſee the neceſſity of faith, pray for it, and are enabled to believe, and thus obtain this witneſs in themſelves: and though ſuch chriſtians are not able to diſpute againſt infidels, yet they are enabled to obey, and ſuffer for the goſpel: And though objections may puzzle them; it is as impoſſible by argument to convince them that the Bible is no divine revelation, as it would be to perſuade them that man created that glorious luminary, whoſe light they behold, and with whoſe beams they are cheared.—As to the external, yea, and internal evidences alſo, conſidered as mere arguments, I would ſay with the Apoſtle in another caſe, "Ye do well to take heed to them, until the day dawn, and the day ſtar ariſe in your hearts."

If this plain ſimple demonſtration of the divine original of the Scriptures, excite in any reader double attention, and diſpoſe him to read them with the ſtricter impartiality, and larger expectations of improvement; if it induce any one, who hath hitherto not conſidered the ſubject, to turn his thoughts that way, and examine more fully for himſelf the external, and internal evidences of their being a divine revelation; if it obviate the unhappy prejudices, or confirm the wavering faith of one individual; if it ſtir up any one to ſeek and wait for the witneſs in himſelf: the Author will then have accompliſhed his purpoſe, and attained his end, in prefixing it to this intended publication.

Proceed we next to conſider the nature of a divine revelation, and the reception to which it is entitled. There are different ſorts of knowledge attainable by us. Some things we know by intuition, others by demonſtration: matters, not capable of ſtrict demonſtration, may be ſhewn to be probable in ſuch a degree, that it would be abſurd to doubt of them, and madneſs not to be governed in our conduct by them. Many things we know by the teſtimony of our own ſenſes; and many others by the teſtimony of competent witneſſes. A very ſmall proportion of the actions of men are the effect of demonſtration, intuition, or perſonal knowledge: probabilities and human teſtimony ſet mankind in motion, and form the main ſpring of their perſevering labours, vigorous exertions, and daring adventures. But if the teſtimony of man be great, the teſtimony of God is greater; which is indeed, when evinced to be his, the higheſt poſſible demonſtration. The

Bible is then the authenticated Teſtimony of God to truths and facts, not otherwiſe diſcoverable, or not with ſufficient clearneſs and certainty. Things paſt, future, and inviſible; truths important, ſublime, and myſterious, are brought to our knowledge, atteſted by him, who cannot err and cannot deceive. Faith therefore is the only operation of the human mind, which is fitted to receive, and appropriate this information. Faith, ſimply receiving and crediting the teſtimony of God's word, is, to reaſon, what the teleſcope is to the aſtronomer: thereby are diſcovered objects, which are totally hid from the unbeliever; and thoſe are ſeen diſtinctly and accurately, which to him appear obſcure and confuſed. Reaſon, appropriating this information received by faith, adds immenſely to her former ſcanty ſtock; and, in the poſture of a ſcholar, receives that knowledge, which muſt for ever be withheld, whilſt ſhe proudly affects to be a teacher. The weakeſt and moſt illiterate of mankind, poſſeſſed of true faith, and acquainted with the word of God, acquires a knowledge in divine things, as much more uſeful and certain, than ever fell to the ſhare of the wiſeſt unbeliever: as the prince's boſom friend, who is privy to all his ſecret plans and purpoſes, is ſuperior in knowledge to the ſpeculating politician, who argues without information from his own ſuppoſed ſagacity; and predicts, from what he conceives ought to be done, that thus it certainly will be; but finds in the event his ingenious conjectures were groundleſs, and his predictions erroneous. When in reliance upon the divine veracity, we receive the Scriptures, as, in every propoſition, indiſputably true, the whole becomes our own; and we have only to work the mine, and be enriched with the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge therein contained. But this faith is very different from a mere aſſent of the underſtanding to the truth of a propoſition: It has alſo reference to it's importance, and our own concern in it, and is inſeparably connected with a conſiſtent practice.—Noah was informed that the flood would come; we are informed that it actually came: but he was intereſted in the event, we are not: we may therefore aſſent to the truth of the hiſtory, without it's having any influence upon our conduct; he could not believe the divine monition, but he muſt neceſſarily do as he did; "be moved with fear, and prepare the ark." The truths of the Bible are not like the reports of the day, which amuſe and gratify, but are of no conſequence to us, true or falſe: they all relate to our important intereſts, and therefore have reference to practice: and the Bible, received in true faith, will become the foundation of

our hope, the ſtandard of our judgment, the ſource of our comfort, the lantern of our feet, and the light of our paths; and implicit faith will produce as implicit obedience.

The Bible alſo is to be conſidered as a complete revelation, ſo that nothing is needful either to be known, believed, or practiſed in religion, except what may be plainly proved thereby. But, on the other hand, it ſhould carefully be remarked, that the *whole word of God is our rule;* and that the preference which is manifeſted, by many profeſſing Chriſtians for one part above another, is derogatory from the credit of the whole; and ariſes from a latent unbelief, and an indulged doubt, whether the whole Scriptures be of divine authority, or only that part which coincides with their favourite tenets. True Faith receives the whole teſtimony, and allows every part it's proper place, and applies it to it's proper uſe, in ſupporting the believer's hope, directing his conduct, and forming his character; "for all Scripture is given by inſpiration from God, and is profit-"able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works."—(2 Tim. C. iii. 16. 17. v.)

But we muſt altogether reject the claim of all unwritten traditions, as well as of apocryphal additions to the written word. Indeed, tradition is ſo uncertain a vehicle, and every thing, thus communicated, is ſo liable to be corrupted, mutilated, or interpolated, that ſcarce any dependance can be placed thereon: and it is no improbable conjecture, that the art of writing itſelf was firſt communicated, by revelation, to Moſes, in order to preſerve and perpetuate the records of thoſe facts, laws, and truths, which he was about to deliver to the children of Iſrael; and it is much to be queſtioned, whether one ſingle particular of the whole revelation made to Prophets and Apoſtles, would have reached our time uncorrupted, had not written records preſerved them. Learned men find no traces of *literary* writing, not even amongſt the Egyptians, till long after the days of Moſes. The art itſelf of expreſſing an almoſt infinite variety of ſounds, by the interchanges of a ſmall number of letters, ſeems more like a diſcovery made to man from heaven, than an human invention: and it's moſt beneficial effects, and almoſt abſolute neceſſity, for the preſervation and ſpread of true religion, fa-

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vour the conjecture. But be that as it will, all who love the Bible, ought to be thankful to God for this important advantage; as alſo for the invention of printing, by which copies of the Scriptures are made ſo numerous, and ſo cheap.

Nor is there any need of apocryphal additions, or any benefit from them; but much danger, leſt they ſhould uſurp the authority, and, in ſome points at leaſt, be ſubſtituted inſtead of the Bible. Conſidered as mere human writings, they may have their uſe: but if cuſtom ſanction ſome of them being bound up with the Bible, truth requires, that we ſhould explicitly be reminded that they are not the *word of God*. Should it be enquired, how we are to diſtinguiſh betwixt the genuine books of Scripture, and ſuch as are apocryphal? the anſwer is obvious: not only ſome, but all the books contained in the canon of the Scriptures, as allowed in the articles of the church of England, and comprized in our common copies of the Bible, have many, or all, of thoſe internal and external evidences of their divine original which have been inſiſted on: but there is not one of thoſe called apocryphal, that might not be proved to be entirely deſtitute of ſuch evidence; and many of them to contain internal evidence of their ſpuriouſneſs.

But what is the province of reaſon reſpecting revelation? Is that noble faculty to be utterly diſcarded and degraded? God forbid. We have already obſerved, that, in the proofs whereby revelation is authenticated, an appeal is made to us, as reaſonable creatures, to judge, but with modeſty and caution, whether it have not a claim to our attention, as coming thus warranted with a meſſage of infinite importance from the moſt high God. Our reaſon alſo muſt be employed in underſtanding the language, and explaining the terms, in which that meſſage is delivered: in matters, wherein we may be ſuppoſed competent to form a judgment, as with reference to the excellency of the commands, the equity of the adminiſtration, and the kindneſs of the conduct of God towards his offending creatures, we are appealed unto, and called upon, to approve the reaſonableneſs of the divine conduct. We may allow alſo, that if any perſon, or body of men, put ſuch a conſtruction upon any Scripture expreſſion, as implies an evident contradiction, (as for inſtance, if any aſſert and bring Scripture to prove, that what we ſee, feel, and taſte to be bread, is indeed the very material body, bones, and blood of a man; which, though a cre-

a creature, is preſent in ten thouſand places at once;) we may reaſonably, nay ought aſſuredly, to reject ſuch interpretation; for no evidence can poſſibly prove that to be true, which our underſtanding and ſenſes demonſtrate to be falſe.—But when doctrines, propoſed as matters of Revelation, and by ſober rules of interpretation ſhewn to be contained in that revelation, involve no real contradiction; but are only myſterious, and above our comprehenſion, or contrary to the general notions of men, and thoſe preconceptions, which we indeed dignify as the dictates of reaſon, but which are more frequently the offspring of pride and ignorance: upon ſuch grounds to reject the teſtimony of God, out of regard to human reaſonings, muſt be the moſt *unreaſonable* conduct imaginable; unleſs man were indeed wiſer than his Maker.

The penmen of the Holy Scriptures often expreſs themſelves in language, taken from their own habits of living, and the ſcenes with which they were converſant: knowledge therefore of various kinds may be very uſeful, and in ſome inſtances neceſſary, for the full underſtanding of them. We are therein addreſſed as creatures endued with common ſenſe, and expected to employ it, in deducing inſtruction, and forming practical concluſions from what we read, and from comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.—We are expected alſo to have ſuch a value for divine truth, as to be willing to beſtow ſome pains in ſearching for it as for hid treaſure; otherwiſe revelation is "a price put into "the hands of a fool to get wiſdom, who has no heart to it." A humble, teachable, and dependent ſpirit is alſo requiſite; for, except we receive the divine teſtimony of the kingdom of God, as little children, we ſhall not enter therein: and at laſt we ſhall read and ſtudy in vain, if we are not willing to practiſe what we have already learned; and to aſk in daily prayer further wiſdom of God, "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." The author of revelation hath alſo beſtowed on ſome men larger abilities, and afforded them more advantages of education, more leiſure, and more opportunities for ſtudy, than others have; theſe are talents, which the word of God commands them to improve. Some ſuch perſons, in every age, are induced by divine grace to devote theſe endowments to the acquiſition and communication of religious knowledge, for the benefit of thoſe, whoſe time is otherwiſe engaged, whoſe talent does not lie that way, and who have need to be excited to conſider, and aſſiſted in un-

derſtanding thoſe things which belong unto their eternal peace. This is eſpecially the work of the Goſpel miniſtry: men thus qualified of God, by giving themſelves wholly thereunto, become mighty in the Scriptures; and being diligently employed in opening and alledging, in reaſoning and perſuading from them, are his inſtruments to awaken men's minds to a concern about eternal things, and ſtir them up to read for themſelves, and enable them to apply general truths, precepts, and examples to their own caſes and circumſtances, for the purpoſes of encouragement and edification.—And though the bare reading of the Scriptures is often bleſſed to the ſouls of men for their everlaſting ſalvation; yet generally faith comes by hearing the word preached, and not merely by peruſing it. This is God's ordinance, to which from age to age his ſeal hath been affixed; and I am perſuaded univerſal experience decides, that true Chriſtianity hath uniformly flouriſhed in almoſt exact proportion to the degree, in which the *word of God, unadulterated, and unmutilated,* has been earneſtly, diligently, and publicly preached by men, whoſe diſintereſted labours and holy lives have given ſanction to their doctrine.

But though oral preaching be the grand means of promoting Godlineſs; written preaching, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion,) has had much ſubordinate uſefulneſs in diſſeminating divine truth. A large proportion of the Scriptures themſelves were occaſional writings ſent to thoſe, whom the penmen could not addreſs by word of mouth: and many eminent men, long ſince dead, ſtill ſpeak to good purpoſe in the writings, which they have left as a bequeſt to the church. Provided what is written be truly ſcriptural, and lead men to read, and aſſiſt them in underſtanding the word of God, we can no more have too many religious books than too many faithful preachers of the Goſpel. Falſe and ſuperficial religion will be ſure to be propagated both from the pulpit and from the preſs; and if Satan's miniſters, (2 Cor. c. xi. v. 15.) be induſtrious in ſowing tares; the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould not be timid or backward in diſperſing the good ſeed.

No method of conveying truth ſeems more advantageous, than that of plain expoſitory lectures upon Scripture, with practical inferences, and animated addreſſes to the heart and conſcience: and if this be true of preaching, it cannot be far otherwiſe in reſpect

reſpect of writing. Where the word of God is ſtill kept in ſight, and the hearer or reader perceives, that he is not amuſed with a pretty fancy, but is indeed informed of the evident meaning of the Bible itſelf, it will have an authority over his conſcience not to be acquired by other means. Not that I would be underſtood as undervaluing critical comments upon the ſacred Scriptures; whatever tends to elucidate their true meaning has an important uſe, and many have done well in that way: but ſtill practical expoſitions ſeem more calculated for general uſefulneſs. Indeed expoſitions are all liable to abuſe, through the pride and luſts of men, who wreſt the Scriptures themſelves to their own deſtruction: but the pious and faithful commentator's labour is no more to be blamed for that abuſe, than the labour of the huſbandman for the intemperate uſe, which men make of the fruits of the earth: and if expoſitions really explaining the Scriptures were multiplied tenfold, there could not be too many; except ſome one had exhauſted the ſubject, (which indeed is inexhauſtible,) and that one was in every perſon's hands, and read by them all. It is impoſſible that all men ſhould hear the ſame preacher; and it is alſo highly improbable that all ſhould read the ſame book.

The formation of men's minds, and their habits of thinking are ſo diverſe, that miniſters of equal faithfulneſs ſeem intentionally to be endued with different qualifications, and directed to varied methods of delivering the ſame truth, and aiming at the ſame object; in order more advantageouſly to engage the attention of diſtinct deſcriptions of hearers: in like manner, ſome are ſuited with the ſtyle, method, and that which may be called the *peculiarity* of one writer; whilſt others are delighted and profited with ſuch as are in all theſe things the very reverſe. Every man alſo has his connexions; and ſome are diſpoſed to hear or read with attention what he ſpeaks; or writes, who have not the ſame favourable diſpoſition towards another perſon, perhaps of ſuperior excellency.

Thus ſome read one man's book, and ſome another's; and ſome have leiſure and opportunity of reading many, and collect ſome benefit from each; and ſo knowledge is diſperſed, and, it is to be hoped, good done.

Although a man's chief care ſhould be to approve himſelf to God, and to his own conſcience, with reſpect to the ſimplicity and integrity of his intention: yet, when there

there are ſo many comments upon the Scripture already, the bold undertaking of adding one more to the number, may ſeem to require an apology to the public. The preceding obſervations introduce the author's, which is ſimply this: experiencing the utility, efficacy, and comfort of that meaſure of acquaintance with the word of God, with which he has been favoured, he would wiſh, were it poſſible, that all the world ſhould enjoy the ſame felicity: and the heart-ſearching God is witneſs, that no motive would have induced him to venture forth in ſo weighty an engagement; had he not hoped to be thereby an inſtrument in promoting the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men.

It is no part therefore of the deſign of this publication, to detract from the merit of former commentators, or to ſuggeſt an idea that any thing will be added, which hath never been advanced before. But the author having for ſeveral years made the Bible his daily and principal ſtudy; and having beſtowed ſome pains to obtain ſatisfaction in his own mind, as to the meaning of moſt parts of Scripture, and the inſtruction contained therein; and ſuppoſing his ſmall talent to lie in ſpeaking plainly and intelligibly to perſons of ordinary capacity; he wiſhes to occupy with it, by communicating his views of divine truth, in connexion with the Scriptures, from which he hath deduced them.

Some comments are too learned for the uſe of plain people, ſome are too voluminous and expenſive; ſome are in very few hands, and not likely to be more generally read; and ſome, which are moſt excellent, are to many readers antiquated, through that faſtidiouſneſs, which reliſhes not the quaintneſs of former, and better times. Were this preſent undertaking therefore entirely upon the plan of former comments, it would not be ſupernumerary, if duly executed. But in arranging old truths, the author purpoſes to adopt ſomewhat of a new method: not indeed entirely *new*; for Browne's ſelf-interpreting Bible ſuggeſted the hint, which will here be enlarged upon: and the improvements in Dr. Doddridge s Family Expoſitor are propoſed *in ſome reſpects*, as models for imitation. The author's deſign is to annex expoſitory notes at the bottom of each page; and, at the cloſe of each chapter, to ſum up the inſtruction contained therein, as it occurs to him, in what he calls PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS; not becauſe doctrine and experience will be excluded; but becauſe he would refer the whole to its practical effect upon the heart and life.

Perhaps

Perhaps the barren field of conjectural criticiſm has already been ſufficiently cultivated; at leaſt the author has not at preſent either leiſure, inclination, or talents for it: and he intends to touch but very ſlightly upon chronology, and ſuch other matters, as are of more difficulty than utility. In general, the tranſlation will be commented upon; and if, in ſome inſtances, the author avails himſelf of the *learned* labours of others; he intends to communicate the information, without attempting to bring forward thoſe critical diſcuſſions upon the original languages, from which it is deduced: being perſuaded that the ordinary reader is not thereby edified, and conſcious that he is incompetent to inſtruct the learned one. The contents of each chapter, expreſſed with all poſſible brevity, are ſolely intended to aſſiſt the reader in finding any ſubject, which he wiſhes to conſider. And upon the whole, to awaken and direct the conſcience, to ſtore the underſtanding with the knowledge of divine truth, to affect and improve the heart, and to promote the fruitfulneſs and comfort of the true Chriſtian, are the leading objects which he has in view, and hopes never to loſe ſight of in this undertaking; avoiding nice diſtinctions, acrimonious controverſy, or ſtudied exactneſs and conſiſtency; chooſing rather to follow the leadings of Scripture, than to preſs it into the ſervice of a pre-eſtabliſhed ſyſtem; and preferring the ſatisfaction of promoting the edification of pious perſons of different ſentiments, to the applauſe of the zealots of any party.

Whatever acceptance this work may meet with from man, the author hopes to be ſatisfied with the teſtimony of his own conſcience, and the expected approbation of his Judge: and would conclude with deſiring an intereſt in the prayers of all, who love the truth, and favour this deſign; that the Father of Lights, the Giver of all Wiſdom and Knowledge, and the God of all Grace would guide his thoughts and pen, enliven and purify his affections, and give him a ſingle eye and a ſimple dependent ſpirit, through the whole of this arduous undertaking, to which, without ſuch aſſiſtance, he is conſciouſly inſufficient: and that, by the divine bleſſing, it may be acceptable and uſeful to the people of God, and tend to the ſpread of true Chriſtianity, and to the glory of God in the ſalvation of men. He truſts his earneſt prayers are, and will be, to the ſame effect; and for the everlaſting good of every one, who ſhall peruſe this publication. AMEN.

The Names and Order of all the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, with the Number of their Chapters.

GENESIS *hath Chapters*	50	II. Chronicles	36	Daniel	12
Exodus	40	Ezra	10	Hoſea	14
Leviticus	27	Nehemiah	13	Joel	3
Numbers	36	Eſther	10	Amos	9
Deuteronomy	34	Job	42	Obadiah	1
Joſhua	24	Pſalms	150	Jonah	4
Judges	21	Proverbs	31	Micah	7
Ruth	4	Eccleſiaſtes	12	Nahum	3
I. Samuel	31	The Song of Solomon	8	Habakkuk	3
II. Samuel	24	Iſaiah	66	Zephaniah	3
I. Kings	22	Jeremiah	52	Haggai	2
II. Kings	25	Lamentations	5	Zechariah	14
I. Chronicles	29	Ezekiel	48	Malachi	4

The Books of the New Teſtament.

MATTHEW *hath Chap.*	28	Epheſians	6	To the Hebrews	13
Mark	16	Philippians	4	The Epiſtle of James	5
Luke	24	Coloſſians	4	I. Peter	5
John	21	I. Theſſalonians	5	II. Peter	3
The Acts	28	II. Theſſalonians	3	I. John	5
Epiſtle to the Romans	16	I. Timothy	6	II. John	1
I. Corinthians	16	II. Timothy	4	III. John	1
II. Corinthians	13	Titus	3	Jude	1
Galatians	6	Philemon	1	Revelation	22

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE OLD TESTAMENT, TO THE BOOKS OF MOSES, AND TO THE BOOK OF GENESIS IN PARTICULAR.

IN opening the ſacred Volume, we begin with the "Old Teſtament," ſo called, not in oppoſition to, but as diſtinguiſhed from, the New Teſtament.—The word, tranſlated Teſtament, is more generally rendered, and more commonly ſignifies a Covenant, and hath reſpect to the condeſcending dealings of God with man, in a way of covenant tranſactions. We are not to ſuppoſe that the Old Teſtament has its name from the Old Covenant of Works, as oppoſed to the New Covenant of Grace and Mercy; as if God dealt with his Old Teſtament Church according to the former. When Adam ſinned, that old Covenant was broken; but it never was, or can be, aboliſhed to the end of time, as to its general tenor, "Do this, and live; tranſgreſs, and die:" All unbelievers remain under it, break it by every ſin, and are condemned by it; and all the warnings and threatenings of the Bible originate from it. But when the "Seed of the Woman" was promiſed, the New Covenant of mercy and grace entered, from which all the promiſes of God to ſinners flow, and all their hopes ariſe: The tenor of this Covenant is, "Believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved;" according to which all true believers have been dealt with from the beginning. But of this Covenant there have been, ſo to ſpeak, ſeveral editions; of which the laſt and moſt complete is called the New Teſtament: in contradiſtinction to which the foregoing editions are called the Old Teſtament; not without reference to the Covenant of peculiarity made with the people of Iſrael, which the introduction of a better Covenant hath cauſed to wax old and to vaniſh away.—The ſubſtance being come, thoſe types and ceremonies, which were but the ſhadow, are aboliſhed, as to their authority over the conſcience: and the boundaries of the church being enlarged, the peculiar temporal bleſſings covenanted conditionally to the Iſraelites, as a nation; and the peculiar ſtatutes enacted for them in their political capacity, are now antiquated, as are all other things in which it accords not with the New Teſtament.—This ſeems the occaſion of the diſtinction betwixt theſe two grand diviſions of the Word of God; yet the whole is of divine original, and important uſe: and even thoſe parts of the Old Teſtament, which we are no longer required to obey as commands, are full of inſtruction, and tend to eſtabliſh and elu-

cidate

cidate the New Teſtament; and will grow into the eſteem of every one, in proportion as he rightly underſtands and reliſhes the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity.

We firſt enter upon the five Books of Moſes, generally called the Law, to diſtinguiſh them from the Pſalms and the Writings of the Prophets: becauſe the law given by Moſes is contained in theſe books.—Yet much of them is hiſtorical, or prophetical, ſome devotional, and all impreſſed with an evangelical ſtamp.—Probably they were the firſt books which ever were written; we are ſure they are the moſt ancient records now extant. The whole was without doubt given by inſpiration from God; or penned under his infallible ſuperintendency, who ſpake with Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his friend. Some of the hiſtory could only be known by revelation; much more could in no other way be ſtated with accuracy and certainty; and all of it is ſo important and uſeful, and is written with ſuch ſimplicity, majeſty, and impartiality, as may ſatisfy us, that the ſacred Penman wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

We begin with "The Book of Geneſis:" *the name is not found in the Hebrew original, but is given to it in the Greek tranſlation, called the Septuagint; it ſignifies* "*The Book of the Beginning,*" *of the Original, or of the Generation; namely, of the Univerſe. It is remarkable that the New Teſtament begins with the ſame two words,* "The Book of the Generation;" *namely, of Jeſus Chriſt; for as the world was made by him, ſo was it made for him. This Book opens, as its name imports, with the Hiſtory of the Creation of the World, and of the entrance of Sin and Death; and then gives us a brief account of the wickedneſs of men, and the judgments of God upon them, eſpecially by the deluge, and the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire: but it more fully records the promiſes of the Saviour, and the Hiſtory of the Church of true believers, from the fall of Adam to the death of Joſeph, for the ſpace of* 2369 *years, according to the general computation; and we are particularly informed of the faith and obedience, the trials and ſupports, the excellencies and blemiſhes, the lives and deaths, (with the exception of Enoch, who was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death,) of a choſen few, who were preſerved uninfected with the general contagion of idolatry and wickedneſs, which overſpread the world around them.—Theſe things are recorded in part for our imitation, and altogether for our inſtruction; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope, and be rendered ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

GENESIS.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. A Revelation of God, the Creator of all things, v. 1. 2d. A distinct account of the Creation of the World in six days, with the particulars of each day's work, v. 3—25. 3d. The creation of man at the close of the sixth day, v. 26, 27. 4th. The blessing pronounced on, the dominion vested in, and the grant made to, him, v. 28—30. 5th. Each part approved as good, and the whole accounted very good by the Creator, v. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night: and the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And

NOTES.

V. 1. *In the beginning*, &c.] It is natural and unavoidable to us, who ourselves are but of yesterday, to enquire about those things, which have been before us, and to carry our reflections back to the original of all things: but our reason is evidently incompetent to the satisfactory solution of these enquiries; as is demonstrated by the uncertainty, contrariety, and absurdity, in which the wisest of the heathens were bewildered upon this subject. However rational it be to conclude, that all things were at first created by the eternal, self-existent, and Almighty God; yet reason hath ever lamentably failed of drawing this conclusion: "And by faith we understand that the "worlds were framed by the word of God; so that "things, which are seen, were not made of things, which "do appear:" (Heb. c. xi. v. 3.) The information, conveyed to us by the word of God, reason can appropriate, approve, and apply, but was unable to anticipate. This knowledge is useful and necessary, but nothing is mentioned about eternity, *a parte ante*, (a past eternity;) that abyss which swallows up all our thoughts, and involves all our reflections and discourses in confusion; for this could only gratify our curiosity, and increase our stock of barren notions. The Scriptures declare that God is from everlasting to everlasting; and reason allows that it must be so, though it cannot comprehend in what manner.—All else had a beginning. With this the inspired penman commences his history, and with most sublime abruptness breaks forth, "*In the begin-*"*ning*:" as if he had said, "This, O man, is enough "for thee to know; here stop thy presumptuous enqui-"ry; call back thy intruding thoughts from things too "high for thee, and learn to know and to adore thy Cre-"ator." The Scriptures are especially intended to teach us the knowledge of God; which is done in the manner best suited to inform and affect us, by recording his words and his works.—From the creation of the world we learn his eternal power and Godhead; and discern, in the things which he hath made, his infinite wisdom and goodness: whilst the simplicity and harmony, subsisting in the midst of the richest variety, lead the mind in the easiest manner to conceive of the Creator, as the *One*, *living*, and *true* God. But it is well known, that the original word, translated God, is plural, in a language that hath three numbers; and that, *when thus used*, it is joined to singular verbs. Probably the Hebrew was the original language; certainly the Lord made choice of it for the first written Revelation of himself to man: so that this grammatical anomaly, at the very beginning of the Scriptures, seems intended to teach us some important lesson concerning that God, who therein reveals himself to us: and it may reasonably be interpreted as an intimation, that in the unity of the Godhead there was also plurality; that is, one God subsisting in three

6 And God ſaid, Let there be a firmament in the midſt of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament, from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was ſo.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the ſecond day.

9 And God ſaid, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry-land appear: and it was ſo.

11 And God called the dry-land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God ſaw that *it was* good.

11 And

Perſons. Though it would be improper to lay the whole weight of this important argument upon this intimation; yet it ſhould not be altogether rejected as a mere verbal criticiſm. God created the heaven and the earth, or the whole univerſe viſible, and inviſible. The word heaven is ſometimes uſed in Scripture for that place, where the divine glory is eſpecially diſplayed, and where angels and happy ſpirits have their reſidence: at other times for the vaſt expanſe, wherein the ſun, moon, and ſtars are placed; and at others for the circumambient air, even to the very ſurface of the earth: it muſt therefore be interpreted as the context requires.—We can collect nothing from hence concerning the angels, except that in the beginning they were created of God. But this viſible world was formed in ſix days. The chaotic maſs ſeems to have been firſt inſtantaneouſly created out of nothing; and then gradually reduced to order and beauty.

V. 2. *The earth*, &c.] This earth, with the heavenly luminaries immediately connected with it, was at firſt an *unformed* maſs of the component elements; *void*, or deſtitute of plants, trees, animals, &c; and covered with thick darkneſs, reſting on the abyſs, or the unformed chaotic maſs, till diſperſed by the agency of the *Spirit of God:* thus, at the very opening of the ſacred Volume, we have an intimation of that divine Spirit, whoſe influences and operations form ſo conſpicuous and diſtinguiſhing a part of Revelation; for, as the efficient cauſe of the creation, *He moved upon the ſurface of the waters.* Let the impartial reader here turn his attention to thoſe texts in the New Teſtament, (*John*, c. 1. v. 3. *Col.* c. 1. v. 16, 17. *Heb.* c. 1. v. 2, 3;) which, in the moſt emphatic language, aſcribe all creation to Jeſus Chriſt, the Son and Word of God: and, comparing them with the account of the agency of the divine Spirit in the work of creation, and with thoſe Scriptures, (as in particular v. 1,) which declare that *God created all things*, he muſt allow, that from the beginning of the Bible there is a real foundation for the doctrine of three divine Perſons in the unity of the Godhead.

V. 3. *Let there be*, &c.] The ſublimity of this paſſage has been univerſally admired by men of learning and taſte; and indeed this ſimplicity is unſpeakably more majeſtic, than thoſe ſtudied ornaments of ſtyle and language, which are generally affected. But it is more to our purpoſe to obſerve, that St. Paul, ſpeaking of converſion, which he frequently terms a new creation, makes a plain alluſion to this paſſage; (2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 6;) intimating thereby, that the dark, diſordered, and unholy ſtate of a ſinner's heart reſembles this chaos: until the Spirit of God moves upon it, and cauſes light to ſhine into the underſtanding, regulates the diſorder of the affections, furniſhes the heart with holineſs, reſtores the ſoul to beauty and harmony, and prepares it as an habitation for his own immediate reſidence.

V. 5. *And the evening*, &c.] There was, it ſeems, before the formation of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, a regular ſucceſſion of light, and darkneſs, on the different parts of the chaotic maſs, which thus meaſured out the firſt day.

V. 6. *Let there be a firmament*, &c.] The word firmament ſeems to ſignify the whole expanſe, which ſurrounds the earth, even to the fixed ſtars, which are ſet "in the open "firmament of Heaven;" "as the fowls" are ſaid "to "fly in the open firmament of Heaven;" and again, "he called the firmament Heaven."—It muſt therefore be underſtood according to the context.

V. 9. *Let the waters be gathered*, &c.] The waters, being ſeparated from the dry ground, were divided into thoſe under the firmament, which are depoſited in the oceans, ſeas, lakes, &c; and thoſe above the firmament, which are ſuſpended in the air, form the clouds, and deſcend in rains and dews, &c.—Inſtead of attempting a further explanation of the terms here uſed, I would rather call the reader's attention to the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God diſplayed in this part of creation.—In the vaſt reſervoir of the oceans and ſeas the waters are primarily treaſured up, being by their ſaltneſs and inceſſant motion preſerved from becoming putrid: theſe facilitate commerce and friendly intercourſe betwixt diſtant nations, ſupply immenſe quantities of wholeſome proviſions, and are in many ways ſerviceable to mankind. From them originally, in one mode of conveyance or other, the whole earth is ſupplied with water, rendered freſh and fit for uſe, and communicated in the gentleſt method. Hereby the ſurface of the ground is fertilized; hence all living creatures quench their thirſt; and thus all the purpoſes of cleanlineſs are anſwered. Thence returning to the ſea by brooks and rivers, the waters enrich and beautify the adjacent countries, and confer manifold benefits upon mankind through the whole of their courſe. Let this hint ſuffice to demand from the reader a tribute of grateful praiſe to the kind giver of all our comforts.

V. 10. *And God called*, &c.] It is obſervable that God himſelf gave names to thoſe creatures, over which Adam could not exerciſe dominion; but left him to give names to the reſt.—Without doubt, theſe names were expreſſive of the nature of the creatures, whether we can now underſtand them, or not.

V. 11.

11 And God ſaid, Let the earth bring forth graſs, the herb yielding ſeed, *and* the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whoſe ſeed *is* in itſelf, upon the earth: and it was ſo.

12 And the earth brought forth graſs, *and* herb yielding ſeed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whoſe ſeed *was* in itſelf, after his kind: and God ſaw that *it was* good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God ſaid, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for ſigns, and for ſeaſons, and for days, and years.

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was ſo.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the leſſer light to rule the night: *he made* the ſtars alſo.

17 And God ſet them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth;

18 And to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkneſs; and God ſaw that *it was* good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God ſaid, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God ſaw that *it was* good.

22 And God bleſſed them, ſaying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the ſeas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God ſaid, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beaſts of the earth after his kind: and it was ſo.

25 And God made the beaſt of the earth after his kind: and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God ſaw that *it was* good.

26 And

V. 11, 12.] Hitherto the whole was inert and lifeleſs: but the vegetable ſyſtem was next produced, in all its vaſt variety and numerous tribes, for the uſe of man and beaſts. Each of theſe was created, not only for individual vegetation, but with the ſurpriſing power of propagating, and multiplying almoſt infinitely its peculiar ſpecies, by ſeeds, often very minute, and ſcarce diſcernible from each other; and yet they never fail to produce the ſame kind of plant, from which they ſprang. Thus creation is carried on from year to year, and, in an incomprehenſible manner, the earth is filled with the riches, and liberality of the Lord.

V. 14—19.] By the Creator's Word, the light was, as it were, treaſured up for the uſe of man in theſe heavenly orbs, (as water is in the ocean;) and with it warmth and fertility have ever ſince been conveyed to the ſeveral regions of the globe; whilſt by their regular circuits time is meaſured out for our convenience—Modern experiments prove that the moon is an opaque body, much leſs than the planets: and it is with great probability ſuppoſed, that the fixed ſtars are lights in themſelves immenſely large; yet the moon is here called a *great light*, in diſtinction from the ſtars: which is a plain proof that the penmen of the Scriptures were not inſpired to ſpeak of natural things with philoſophical exactneſs; but were left to uſe popular language, and to diſcourſe of ſuch matters according to their appearance. Ignorance or error in theſe reſpects is not fatal, and the moſt exact knowledge is *comparatively* of ſmall value: "Unto man he ſaid, the fear of the Lord, that is wiſ-"dom, and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding." (*Job* c. xxviii. v. 28.)

V. 20—25.] The earth reduced to order and beauty, repleniſhed with vegetable treaſures, and lighted up with unſpeakable ſplendour, had yet remained deſtitute of inhabitants: but in theſe verſes we have a conciſe account of the formation of the various ſpecies of animals, which inhabit the waters, the air, and the dry land. A very ſuperficial acquaintance with their numerous tribes, and different ſizes, immenſely large, or inviſibly minute; their diſtinct modes of exiſtence in different elements, and on different ſuſtenance; the ſurpriſing exactneſs, and kind contrivance, with which the organized body in every ſpecies is formed; and the various ways, in which they ſubſerve the uſe and pleaſure of man, may ſuffice to ſhew us that we have abundant reaſon to admire and adore the great Creator. Whilſt the nature of life itſelf, its production, continuance, and propagation in every diſtinct ſpecies, forms a very proper ſubject for our ſpeculations; if we would be convinced how incomprehenſible the works of God are, and how very ignorant man is. The great Creator need not deſcend to minute enumeration of his works, to diſplay his glory; though we may probably deſcend to the minute inveſtigation of them. We may, therefore, juſt obſerve, that there is no particular mention here made of many things, which

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26 And God ſaid, Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs: and let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and

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are to us of the greateſt importance. The air, which modern experiments have evinced to be of abſolute neceſſity to animal and vegetable life, and in which ſuch traces of divine wiſdom and goodneſs are diſcovered, is not here explicitly mentioned. Whilſt the ſurface of the earth is clothed with vegetable riches, and inhabited by uſeful animals; we know that underneath are ſtored moſt valuable treaſures, placed thus out of our way, but not out of our reach. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all: the earth is full of thy goodneſs!"

V. 26. *And God ſaid, &c.*] This is not only the language of deliberation, but of conſultation alſo; and intimates much more than the ſuperior excellency and dignity of the creature about to be formed.—It is not to be conceived, that the infinite God, by ſpeaking in the plural number, ſhould employ a language, which, though uſed by, reflects no honour on, earthly princes; and, which, (in its original invention at leaſt,) favours of mean oſtentation, and little vanity; and forms one of thoſe trifling expedients, which have been deviſed to prevent monarchs, who were not poſſeſſed of more ſubſtantial diſtinctions, from ſinking to the level of their ſubjects:—But it would be ſtill more intolerable to ſuppoſe that the eternal God in theſe words addreſſed any of his own creatures, as fellow workers with him in the creation of man. Yet as far as I can ſee, theſe are the only expedients, which can be employed by thoſe who allow the divine inſpiration of the whole Scripture, and yet refuſe their aſſent to the doctrine of the Trinity: whereas, admit this doctrine to be ſcriptural, and the expreſſions are ſuitable, natural, and need no further explanation. The three Perſons in the ſacred Trinity at firſt concurred in counſel and operation in forming man, as afterwards in his recovery from the fall.—Nor let it be imagined, that in avoiding one difficulty, we run ourſelves into another, and a greater. For it can never be ſhewn impoſſible, that the ſame infinite Being ſhould be *Three* in one reſpect, and *One* in another. We *know*, and it is abſurd to deny, the ſoul and body to be diſtinct ſubſtances; yet they form one man, who is *two* in one reſpect, and *one* in another: but who can comprehend the bond of union betwixt his own ſoul and body, or explain how they mutually operate upon each other? And if we are incomprehenſible to ourſelves, how ſhould it be poſſible for us to comprehend our great Creator?—This indeed ſeems the limitation of human knowledge: by experiments the natural philoſopher diſcovers, that things indeed *are ſo*, and have *ſuch* properties and powers: but *how* and *why* they *are*, and *operate* in ſuch a manner, remains ſtill an impenetrable ſecret: the proceſs of nature in the vegetation of a grain of corn, from its being caſt into the earth until the gathering in of the harveſt, lies no more within the powers of our comprehenſion, than the doctrine of the Trinity:—and he who will believe no more than he can comprehend, rejecting all myſteries as incredible, muſt queſtion his own exiſtence, or be inconſiſtent with himſelf. The authenticated teſtimony of God is ſurely as ſufficient to eſtabliſh the doctrine, as to its truth and certainty, in matters of revelation, as experiments are to eſtabliſh the fact in philoſophy: the manner *how* is no more matter of *faith* in the one, than of *ſcience* in the other: nor are the difficulties greater, except as infinity is more beyond the ſcanty graſp of our finite capacities.

None, but a God, can comprehend a God.

The great Creator then ſaid, Let *us* make man, in *our* image, after *our* likeneſs: and the expreſſion is doubled and varied, that it may more engage our attention, and enſure our belief.—This image and likeneſs of God cannot be in the body; for God is a *Spirit*, which no bodily ſhape can in any reſpect reſemble. In the ſoul, therefore, we muſt look for it; and there we ſhall find it according to that meaſure, wherein finite can reſemble infinite being. The ſoul of man even in his preſent ſtate bears ſome reſemblance of its Maker: the underſtanding, memory, and imagination in their ſeveral operations give a faint ſhadow of the divine wiſdom and knowledge; the *will*, and the active powers which it poſſeſſes, have ſome ſimilitude to the almighty effects of the divine volitions; and ſhew that *mind* can act upon *matter*, though we cannot explain in what manner. Nay, conſcience, in the exerciſe of her dictatorial and judicial functions, gives ſome feeble reflection of the juſtice and holineſs of the Judge of all: whilſt the derived and dependent immortality of the human Soul reminds us of him, who is ſelf-exiſtent and eternal. But fallen angels, who poſſeſs theſe powers in ſuperior meaſure, are never ſaid to bear the image of God; and little, if any thing, in Scripture can be fairly interpreted of *fallen* man's being like his Maker, till renewed unto his image by divine grace: we muſt therefore conclude that there was a higher and nobler ſenſe in which Adam was formed in the image and likeneſs of God.—We allow that no adequate conception can be formed of Adam's primeval ſtate and powers, from the brief account, which is given of him in Scripture: but we may alſo avail ourſelves of the revelation given us, concerning the moral attributes of God; we may contemplate the character of Jeſus Chriſt, who in human nature diſplayed the divine image in full perfection; we may examine the moral law which deſcribes, and the Chriſtian's character, who, being *renewed* in knowledge righteouſneſs and true holineſs, exemplifies, the image of God; whilſt the expreſſion, *renewed*, implies that it is the ſame image, which ſin had defaced. From theſe ſeveral ſources of information we may deduce ſome ſatisfactory concluſions. God alone can have perfect, infallible, immutable knowledge: but Adam was created in his meaſure after the divine image, both in his capacity of receiving, and in the diſpoſition of his heart to entertain true knowledge; and he actually poſſeſſed from the gift of God a right underſtanding and a competent knowledge of his Creator, of himſelf, of his own ſituation, his duty, his intereſts, of his obligations to obedience, and of the odious nature, as well as evil conſequences of diſobedience.—In theſe and ſimilar concerns, we may be aſſured, he knew, and judged according to

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and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his *own* image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it; and have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God ſaid, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing ſeed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding ſeed: to you it ſhall be for meat.

30 And to every beaſt of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was ſo.

31 And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good, and the evening and the morning were the ſixth day.

CHAP.

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the knowledge and judgment of his Maker; though not *infallibly* nor *immutably*.—Reſulting from this ſtate of the underſtanding and judgment, we may conclude, that, in conformity to God, he poſſeſſed a diſpoſition to value or contemn, to approve or diſapprove, to love or deteſt every object, which preſented itſelf to his mind, according to its real excellency, worthleſsneſs, or hatefulneſs.—In ſuch a ſtate of the heart, that is, of the judgment will and affections, the divine image muſt evidently conſiſt: and we may thence certainly infer, that in theſe things Adam reſembled his Maker. Knowledge in a creature muſt be limited; error may follow, and thence a change of judgment and diſpoſition may be induced: that is, a holy creature may fall, and become unholy: but imperfection in the original diſpoſition of the heart ſuppoſes the creature formed unholy, and is inconſiſtent with being created after the image of God.

In an underſtanding enlightened with true knowledge, a judgment free from corrupt bias, a will diſpoſed to obedience, and affections regulated according to reaſon and truth, we determine the image of God, in which Adam was created, to have conſiſted; nor can we conceive it to conſiſt in any thing elſe. From ſuch a ſtate of mind, godlineſs in all its internal exerciſes, and external expreſſions; righteouſneſs, truth, benevolence, purity, and an exact regulation and government of every appetite and paſſion, muſt neceſſarily reſult; and every duty to God and man be conſtantly and delightfully attended to.

The ſame diſpoſition of heart would enſure his belief of every truth, that God ſhould afterwards reveal; his obedience to every precept which he ſhould enjoin; his cordial acceptance of every propoſal, which he ſhould make; and admiration of every diſcovery of the divine glory, with which he ſhould be favoured: and could it have been poſſible for him to have ſinned, without impairing this divine image; it would have diſpoſed him to repent; and, in faith love and joy, to receive the Mediator, in whom believers truſt; and to exerciſe all thoſe graces, and practiſe all thoſe duties, which ſpring from the character of a redeemed ſinner.

Man, thus created in the divine image, was conſtituted ruler over the other creatures. This dominion has been frequently termed a part of the divine image; but it ſeems more natural to conſider the capacity for exerciſing dominion, as the reſult of that image; and that the actual grant of dominion was made to man in conſequence of that capacity, and as ſhadowing forth the divine ſovereignty over all his works. The ſubjection of the animals, had not ſin entered, would have been more entire and voluntary, and the exerciſe of man's authority more benign and gentle, than at preſent.—Man is now too often a ſevere tyrant over the animals within his reach, and under his power; and numbers ſeem to have ſhaken off, or fled away from his abuſed dominion.

V. 28. *And God bleſſed them*, &c.] Having formed them with capacities for enjoyment, and furniſhed them with all things externally conducive to it; the beneficent Creator thus aſſured them of his favour and bleſſing, to conſummate their felicity, and ſecure his continuance: and it is probable that Adam was taught to expect, that after a term of probation upon earth, he, and his deſcendants, if they perſevered in obedience, would be tranſlated into heaven; or be favoured with ſome confirmation in happineſs equivalent to it.

The increaſe of the human ſpecies formed a part of the Creator's benediction: and had not ſin entered, it would have been a progreſſive communication and multiplication of felicity! In this method creation is ſtill carried on, and the divine perfections are exerciſed and diſplayed in the continuance, as well as in the firſt production of the creatures: though the former excites leſs ſurpriſe in us, becauſe cuſtom leads us to expect it.

V. 29, 30. Neither our wants and inclinations, nor the ſuitableneſs of the creatures to ſupply and gratify them, give us our right to uſe them; but the grant of the great proprietor: in this grant the animals are joined, as equally entitled to proviſion from the Creator's bounty.—Animal food ſeems not to have been granted till after the flood; nor to have been deſired, or thought of, before the fall.

V. 31. *Very good.*] Each production of creative power was before pronounced *Good*.—After man's creation the whole was declared to be *very Good*. A ſuperior excellency, from an harmonious connexion of perfect parts in one perfect whole, was ſuperadded, each deriving from, and reflecting beauty upon the reſt: and the creation of man, the image, and vicegerent of his Maker, the only worſhipper in this auguſt temple, who in reaſonable adoration might render to him the glory of the whole, completed the deſign, and ſtamped it *very good*. The perfections of God are worthy of being exerciſed, diſplayed

CHAP. II.

Is an appendix to the preceding hiſtory of the creation; and contains, 1ſt. The inſtitution of the ſabbath, v. 1.—3. 2d. Further particulars of the production of the vegetables, and of the creation of man, v. 4.—7. 3d. The garden of Eden, how it was planted, and where ſituated; man placed in it; the permiſſion given him to eat of the fruit, with a ſolemn interdiction of one ſingle tree, 8—17. 4th. The animals named of Adam, the woman created, and marriage inſtituted, 18.—25.

THUS the heavens and the earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them.

2 And on the ſeventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he reſted on the ſeventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified it: becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his work, which God created and made.

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played, contemplated, admired, and adored: man was formed capable of perceiving that manifeſted glory, rendering the tribute of vocal praiſe, and finding felicity in his Maker's worſhip and love. This was well pleaſing to the Lord, who moſt perfectly acquieſced in his work, "Whilſt the morning ſtars ſang together, and all the "ſons of God ſhouted for joy." Thus the creation of the heavens and the earth was completed in ſix days; which doubtleſs the Creator could have effected in an inſtant; but he deemed it more ſuited to his majeſty and wiſdom to do it gradually, and by progreſſive advances; that we, leiſurely contemplating theſe his wonders, might note more carefully the glories diſplayed in them; and ſeeing each, majeſtically riſe ſuperior to all, that went before, might be more ſuitably affected with admiring gratitude, and ſtirred up to adoring praiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The account given us in this chapter of the Author and original of all things is ſo rational, ſatisfactory, and ſublime; and the viſible creation, as it ſubſiſts at this day, diſplays ſuch wiſe contrivance, powerful operation, and beneficent attention to the wants, and welfare of all creatures; that atheiſts, and all others, "who" with the Bible in their hands, and the creation before their eyes, "honour not the Creator as God, neither are thankful," muſt be for ever left without excuſe; and infidelity and impiety muſt manifeſtly appear to be as abſurd and fooliſh, as they were wicked. The Creator of all things is without controverſy the ſole proprietor, and ſovereign Lord of all. Our very bodies and ſouls are his, and not our own; for "he made us, and not we ourſelves:" he hath therefore an undoubted right to diſpoſe of us, and of all creatures, as he pleaſes. To him an account muſt be rendered of the uſe, which we make of his gifts, according to the tenor of his holy law. Nor ſhould we allow ourſelves, for one moment, to loſe ſight of this important truth: for by ſuch conſiderations we ſhall not only be reſtrained from abuſing the work and gift of God in the practice of ſin; but excited to employ all we are, have, and enjoy in the ſervice, and to the glory of our liberal Benefactor. As our obligations to him are ſo vaſt, his largeſt demands of our love, worſhip, and ſervice are perfectly reaſonable: yet tried by this plain rule, our own hearts muſt certainly condemn our paſt and preſent conduct. In our own private hiſtory, as well as that of the world in all ages, we may read what havock ſin hath made in the creation of God, once by infallible wiſdom pronounced *very good!* eſpecially in man created in his own image and likeneſs! and we ſhall ſhortly hear the Creator ſpeak of him in other language.—In the mean time let us bleſs God for the Goſpel of Chriſt, and take warning from the conſideration of the *almighty power* of that God, againſt whom we have ſinned, (the effects of which we have been contemplating,) to flee from the wrath to come, and to ſeek reconciliation to him; that his powerful arm may be engaged in our ſalvation, and not to our deſtruction. Being thus protected from, and made victorious over all our enemies, and being new created unto the image of God in holineſs; we ſhall be rendered meet for, and at length obtain admiſſion into the "new heavens, and new earth wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs."

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1, *All*, &c.] All the parts of the viſible creation are arranged in, and fill up, their proper places, like ſoldiers in a well diſciplined army: ſo that number and variety connect with regularity and beauty; and conduce to the perfection of the whole, according to the plan, and for the glory of the great Creator.

V. 2. *On the*, &c.] The Lord was pleaſed to complete his deſign, juſt when the ſixth day ended, and the ſeventh commenced; and then he reſted from all his work: not that the exertion of creating power had cauſed wearineſs, or that his reſt was quieſcent; for he ſtill upholds, preſerves, renovates, and governs the whole: in which ſenſe Chriſt ſays, "The Father worketh hitherto, and "I work." But he ceaſed from creating, and added no more; and acquieſced with entire ſatisfaction in the whole, as worthy of himſelf, and expreſſive of his glory.

V. 3. *And God bleſſed*, &c.] This is evidently hiſtorical, and not mentioned by way of anticipation; for we have here both the appointment of the ſabbath, and the reaſon for it: "Becauſe that in it the Lord reſted," &c. which reaſon ſubſiſted from the beginning, and ſeems more cogent immediately, than it could be, after having lain dormant above 2000 years; and when not adduced, till ſin had marred the beauty of the great Creator's works. This is confirmed by the cuſtom of meaſuring time by weeks, that hath *generally* prevailed in all ages and nations of the world; and which may moſt reaſonably be accounted for, by ſuppoſing it to be the remains of an original tradition, handed down to all the poſterity of Adam, and Noah. And the ſilence of Moſes concerning the obſervation of the ſabbath by the Patriarchs,

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4 These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created: in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens;

5 And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field, before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground.

6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden: and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And

so far from proving that they were not commanded to observe it, will not render it so much as probable, that they did not actually keep it; in the judgment of such persons, as have attentively considered, how much darkness rests upon many similar subjects, in the Scripture history of the Old Testament Church.

The sabbath being made for man, was coeval with his creation.—Even in the state of innocence, Adam and Eve were employed in dressing, and keeping the garden: and though they were exempt from sin and suffering, yet their rational nature was capable of a far more exalted state; and they were taught to consider themselves as preparing for it by progressive improvement: the seventh day, therefore, being blessed and sanctified of God, separated from common employments, and consecrated to religious worship; they would be required, upon it especially, to remember their Creator, to contemplate his works, and render him their tribute of thankful praise; and this would even in Paradise be conducive to the glory of God, and beneficial to them; perhaps absolutely necessary to their safety and felicity. (Exod. c. xx. v. 8—11.)

V. 4, *These*, &c.] This is the real and true account of their origin, in opposition to the fables of poets, and the fancies of speculating philosophers.

V. 5, 6.] In general God employs both the genial warmth of the sun, and the refreshing rains, and also the labour of man, in producing the fruits of the earth: but he needs them not; therefore these first productions, (which were probably in full perfection,) were prepared before the sun was created, the rain descended, or man was formed: but from the time that the vegetables were produced, a mist arose from the earth, and descended on them in gentle dews, for their refreshment, and preservation.

V. 7. *The dust of the ground*, &c.] This is mentioned to excite our admiration of the Maker's skill, who formed so exquisite a structure as the human body, of such mean materials; to abate our pride and vanity, and over solicitude about these bodies, which are of so low original; and to prepare us for the solemn sentence, "Dust thou "art, and to dust thou shalt return." Yet the Lord not only gave man life in common with the other animals, whose bodies were formed of the same materials, but immediately communicated *from himself* the rational soul; which is denoted by the expression of breathing. This should remind us to give our souls, which are thus nobly descended, a decided preference above the earthly body, and to spurn animal indulgences in comparison with heavenly things. Thus the first Adam became a living soul: but by *the fall* man having become *dead* in sin, through the departure of him, who is the author, and giver of spiritual life: in infinite mercy, the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, became a quickening spirit, (1 *Cor.* c. xv. v. 45.) and by the communication of the Holy Ghost, the fruit of his meritorious mediation, he restores to us divine life, and renews the divine image. And it is remarkable that Jesus, (after his resurrection, with apparent reference to this expression, and intimating that it was he, "who first breathed into "man's nostrils the breath of life,)" breathed upon his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (*John*, c. x. v. 22.)

V. 8, 9.] This garden, planned doubtless with exquisite beauty, and stored with every thing which could regale all man's senses, seems to have been intended as a pledge of heavenly felicity.—The word Paradise, or the garden, in allusion to Eden, is frequently used for Heaven itself, and there are many references to it in Scripture. The tree of life also seems to have been a sacramental pledge of immortality; and by eating its fruit, life and felicity were sealed to Adam, as long as he continued obedient. The frequent allusions in Scripture to the tree of life, when Christ and heavenly things are spoken of, intimates that the first creation had in it a reference to the new creation in Christ Jesus; for "known unto God are all his works from before the "foundation of the world." The tree of knowledge seems to have been thus called, because that, by the prohibition of its fruit, a revelation was made to Adam of his Maker's will; of his own duty, interest, situation, and danger; of the consequences of his future conduct; and of the prescribed condition of life or death, happiness or misery; in which things his most interesting *knowledge* consisted. By this test also his Creator proved him, and made *known* what was in the heart of creatures, and how little dependence could be placed on them. By abstaining from this fruit, the knowledge of good would be enjoyed: but by eating of it the knowledge of evil would be fatally introduced. It might also intimate that man should set boundaries even to his thirst for knowledge; and covet rather to know and obey the commands of God, than to pry into unrevealed secrets. To these meanings Satan artfully superadded his pernicious misinterpretation, which will shortly require our attention.

V. 14.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11 The name of the firſt *is* Piſon: that *is* it which compaſſeth the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold;

12 And the gold of that land *is* good: there *is* bdellium and the onyx ſtone.

13 And the name of the ſecond river *is* Gihon: the ſame *is* it that compaſſeth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14 And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel: that *is* it which goeth towards the eaſt of Aſſyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dreſs it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, ſaying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayeſt freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.

18 And the LORD God ſaid, *It is* not good that the man ſhould be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed

V. 14. *Hiddekel—Euphrates.*] From theſe well-known rivers, the Hiddekel or Tygris, and the Euphrates, learned men have determined that the Garden of Eden was ſituated in, or near Meſopotamia; and ſome have even ſuppoſed that the preciſe ſpot may be aſcertained: but this is doubtful, and immaterial.

V. 15. *To dreſs and keep it.*] God gives every thing to man's labour, which was needful even in innocence, and in paradiſe; becauſe in activity true excellency and felicity conſiſts. Even the heavenly reſt will not be inaction, but action with delight and without wearineſs.

V. 16, 17.] Man created in the image of God, had the moral law written in his heart as the law of his holy nature; and doubtleſs was both required, and inclined to that *love* of God and his creatures, which is its ſubſtance and fulfilment.—But the prohibition here impoſed was an additional inſtituted teſt of obedience; and being accompanied with the liberal allowance which precedes it, formed a proper trial of his love, and of the ſubmiſſion of his inclinations to the will of his beneficent Benefactor. It likewiſe intimated to him, that the favour of God, and not animal gratification, was the proper felicity of his nature; and taught him not to conſider himſelf at the ſummit of his happineſs, in a ſtate where ſelf-denial was required.

The event demonſtrates that the annexed denunciation implied, that by tranſgreſſion he would totally forfeit his Maker's favour, and incur his diſpleaſure, with all its awful effects: that immediately he would become liable to pain and diſeaſe; which, as a tedious execution, ſhould not ceaſe, but in the diſſolution of the body: and that he would alſo loſe the holy image of God, and all the comfort of his favour; and experience the torment of ſinful paſſions, and the terror of his Maker's vengeance; which, *according to this covenant*, muſt endure coeval with the exiſtence of his immortal ſoul. The ſame evidence proves, that the whole human race, then in the loins of their common father, and repreſented by him as their fœderal head, were intereſted in this tranſaction.—To argue againſt theſe things, is to combat ſtubborn facts, as well as divine revelation: for man is evidently a ſinful creature, and ſhews his natural propenſities by his firſt actions, and his continual conduct: he is under undeniable tokens of divine diſpleaſure, and expoſed to ſufferings and death; whilſt a dark cloud, impenetrable, except by the light of revelation, reſts upon his ſtate beyond the grave. The Scriptures always addreſs him as in this miſerable ſituation, and of this ſinful character: and theſe things have been univerſally true in all ages and nations. If men will find fault with that, which God hath evidently done, let them anſwer it to him.—He deigns not to apologize for his own conduct: and, with our dark and imperfect views, we ſhall probably be deemed too officious, if *we* attempt it—"Shall not "the Judge of all the earth do right?" ſeems the proper anſwer to ſuch objectors; and to wait for a world of clearer light, is our proper behaviour.—To allow the wiſdom, juſtice and goodneſs of the divine conduct, only when we are capable of perceiving them, favours neither of humility nor of faith; the ſame approbation is due to an equal, or an enemy: but it becomes us, and is honourable to God, when we adore the depths, which we cannot fathom, and believe that "though clouds and "darkneſs are round about him, yet juſtice and judg-"ment are the baſis of his throne."

Could we diveſt ourſelves of partiality, we might diſcern in ſome degree the reaſonableneſs of the prohibition; the divine goodneſs, in ſelecting, as the condition of this covenant, ſo eaſy a teſt of obedience, and in the implied reſtipulation, that if he did not eat, he ſhould not die; and the peculiar meetneſs of Adam to be the repreſentative, as being the common father of the human race. Many things have been copiouſly and plauſibly argued upon theſe topicks: but it is freely granted, that great difficulties remain; and that they, who will give their Maker credit for his juſtice and goodneſs, no further than they can perceive them, muſt needs ſtumble at this ſtumbling ſtone, after all that can be done to remove it. Man's mortality and depravity, and the whole hiſtory of mankind, authenticate the Scripture Revelation upon this ſubject; and as collateral evidences, prove that it is God's teſtimony, and that we miſtake not its meaning: on this ground faith receives it, and humbled reaſon ſubmits to her teacher, God; and allows his righteouſneſs, though ſhe cannot fully comprehend it.

V. 18. *Not good*, &c.] It was not conducive to the happineſs of the man, to remain without the ſolace of ſociety, and the endearment of tender friendſhip: nor conſiſtent

formed every beaſt of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to ſee what he would call them: and whatſoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beaſt of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God cauſed a deep ſleep to fall upon Adam, and he ſlept: and he took one of his ribs, and cloſed up the fleſh inſtead thereof;

22 And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam ſaid, This *is* now bone of my bones, and fleſh of my fleſh: ſhe ſhall be called Woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of man.

24 Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and his mother, and ſhall cleave unto his wife: and they ſhall be one fleſh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not aſhamed.

ſiſtent with the end of his creation to be without marriage, by which the earth was to be repleniſhed. God withholds no good things from thoſe whom he loves.

V. 20. *Adam gave names*, &c.] Adam was better acquainted, by intuition as it were, with the diſtinct properties of every creature, than the moſt ſagacious obſervers, ſince the fall, have been able to become with their utmoſt ſtudy. When, therefore, the power of God brought them before him for that purpoſe, he gave them names expreſſive of their diſtinct natures. Yet, upon this review, not one was found in outward form his counterpart, (as the animals were formed male and female;) nor one ſuited to engage his affections, participate his enjoyments, or aſſociate with him in the worſhip of God.

V. 21, 22.] The Lord having ſupernaturally caſt Adam into a deep ſleep, without his conſciouſneſs, or pain, took from that part of his body, which was near the heart, the ſubſtance, of which he formed the woman, who was to be as part of himſelf, and the object of his moſt cordial affections. She was taken from *him*, and not out of the ground, that there might be a natural foundation of moderate ſubordination on the Woman's part, and ſympathizing tenderneſs on the Man's: as a man rules over, yet in ruling over, carefully defends and tenderly takes care of his own body. The Lord then conducted her, as his gift, to Adam: that under his ſanction, and according to his appointment, yet doubtleſs with their own moſt entire approbation, they might be united in marriage for their mutual good; and that he might thus authorize, and give an example for the regulation of all future marriages.

V. 23, 24.] Doubtleſs the Lord made known to Adam in what manner the Woman had been created from a part of himſelf, to be his companion. The original word, by which he called her, is the ſame as is often rendered *man*, but with the feminine termination annexed to it: and it imports that ſhe was exactly his counterpart, taken from him, united to him, and like him in every thing but ſex; and it expreſſed his grateful ſatisfaction in his Creator's gift. According to this original inſtitution of marriage, the neareſt of all relations, and the proper ſource of all the reſt; men in all future ages would leave the immediate ſociety even of their parents, to lay the foundation of new families, and thenceforth all other relative affections and duties muſt be regulated in ſubordination to the affections and duties of that new relation. Thus one man and one woman would be united ſo cloſely, as to become one fleſh: ſo that, according to the original inſtitution, nothing could ſeparate them, but that which diſſolves the union of ſoul and body; and even divides the component parts of the body from each other. It is not evident, whether this was ſpoken by Adam, or by Moſes: but certainly it was the word of God, ſpeaking by one of them, (Matt. c. xix. v. 4. 6.) Neither polygamy nor divorces can accord with this original inſtitution. In the beginning it was not ſo; nor would ſuch things have been practiſed, but for the ſinful luſts of men. Equally unſcriptural are conſtrained celibacy, and needleſs reſtraints upon marriage: the records of former times, and obſervation upon the preſent evince, that ſtill it is not generally good for man to be alone. The mutual inclination of the ſexes for each other, (which was originally implanted by the Creator, however debaſed by ſin,) when regulated by the law of God, and free from other reſtraints, becomes the foundation of all the other relations of life, the ſource of the moſt rational of our earthly comforts, and equally beneficial to individuals, families, and nations: like a river, which, gliding within its banks, beautifies and enriches the neighbouring plains. But when its regular courſe is obſtructed by unſcriptural reſtraints, or when it burſts through the bounds appointed of God, it diffuſes vice, diſcord, diſeaſe and miſery around with horrible rapidity: like the ſame river, obſtructed in its natural channel, overflowing its banks, inundating and deſolating the fields, and converting the neighbouring country into a marſh or fen, whoſe ſtagnating waters ſpread ſtench and infection all around.

V. 25, *Were not aſhamed*, &c.] The human body, the moſt noble production in the material creation, needed not to have been concealed, had not ſin diſgraced the Creator's work: and probably ſhame had not been excited in the manner in which it hath been even ſince man became a ſinner, had not the ſinful nature been communicated with the propagation of the human ſpecies.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As God himſelf contemplated his whole work with cordial approbation, and reſted in it with entire acquieſcence; it muſt be very preſumptuous, and dangerous for us to find fault with any part of it. We are indeed

CHAP. III.

Is an history of that melancholy event, to which the Apostle refers, when he says, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It contains, 1st. Satan in the serpent tempting the woman, v. 1—5. 2d. The woman eating the forbidden fruit, and tempting the man, who follows her example, v. 6. 3d. Their guilty shame, and vain attempt to remove it, v. 7. 4th. Their summons, arraignment, and conviction before their Judge, v. 8—13. 5th. The sentence denounced against the offenders, containing the gracious promise of a Redeemer, v. 14—19. 6th. Adam and Eve clothed with skins of beasts, and excluded from the garden of Eden, v. 20—24.

NOW the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made: and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

capable of perceiving the wisdom and goodness of God displayed in many of the constituent parts of the vast creation, and of rendering to him the tribute of adoring praise; but it indicates the most daring pride, to suppose ourselves competent to understand, or criticise the whole. As the only wise God instituted the Sabbath in Paradise, before the entrance of sin, we may thence infer, not only the advantage, but the absolute necessity, of time set apart for the immediate service of God, as the world now is; if we would pay any suitable regard to Religion, or to the salvation of our immortal souls. How much then should we sinners value, and how diligently should we *keep holy* the Christian Sabbath; and take care that our children and domestics have leisure and opportunity; and make use of them, for the same salutary purposes! Additional favours conferred upon us, lay us under additional obligations to grateful obedience: and as our liberal Benefactor indulges us in all things truly good for us; it is but reasonable that we give him credit for his wisdom and kindness even in his restraints and prohibitions, and chearfully deny ourselves at his requirement.

The covenant of works was holy, and just, and good; being proposed by a God of perfect holiness, justice, and goodness; and acceded to by Adam, before sin had impaired his powers, perverted his judgment, or depraved his heart: Yet it is *contrary to us*, who in Adam, and after his example, have violated the terms of it. We have, therefore, great reason to be thankful for another covenant, established upon better promises; and ratified by the engagements of a better Surety. To him let us flee for refuge, and from him alone seek deliverance from shame and pain, from sin and death. And whilst we receive all our worldly, and relative comforts from the hand of our reconciled God; whilst we seek his blessing upon them, use them according to his appointment, and attend to the duties which they require according to his command: Let us not forget, that an union must be formed with the Lord Jesus, of which marriage itself is but a type and shadow; we must be *one Spirit* with him, and cleave to him in simple dependence, cordial attachment, and devoted obedience and submission; even though it should interfere with the comfort of that most endeared relation: Then death which dissolves all other unions, will complete this to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *The serpent was*, &c.] Adam and Eve had, perhaps, noticed with pleasure and partiality, that the serpent possessed an instinctive sagacity, more resembling the effects of reason, than that of any other creature: Which suggested to Satan the device of using this animal, as his instrument in temptation. So that to the woman *the serpent* appeared to speak; but in reality *Satan* spake by the serpent; as in the days of Christ, the unclean spirits employed the organs of speech of the possessed persons. Common sense, and the whole Scripture, lead us to conclude, that the serpent was only the instrument, Satan the real actor in this matter: who is therefore called the serpent, the old dragon, a liar, and a murderer from the beginning. The word of God reveals to us the world of spirits, holy and unholy, of which otherwise we should have no certain knowledge: Faith avails itself of this information; but unbelief rejects it in contempt of God, and to the infidel's irreparable damage: for nothing better answers the purpose of the powers of *darkness*, than to work in the *dark*; and none serve their interests more effectually, than they who deny and endeavour to disprove their existence; for we never can guard against the attacks of unseen or unsuspected enemies. But from the Scriptures faith learns that angels have sinned and kept not their first estate: that being created of God holy and happy, they by transgression forfeited the favour and incurred the displeasure of their Creator, and became unholy and miserable; yea desperate in the certain expectation of increasing and everlasting misery. Being, however, still endued with vast capacities, profound sagacity, extensive knowledge, great power; and, at the same time, being wholly actuated by unbounded enmity, malice, envy, pride, ambition, and deceit; they maintain determined rebellion against their Maker: and, as they are very numerous, they have established a kingdom in opposition to his kingdom, under the dominion of the arch apostate, the Devil or Satan; so that, as far as they are permitted, they are unwearied and insatiable in mischief; aiming at nothing less than reducing the whole creation to a state of rebellion, anarchy and misery; and rendering all creatures as vile and wretched as themselves. Doubtless the beauty of the new created world; the glory of God, and the happiness of man, excited the envy and rage of these evil spirits; and suggested to Satan the malicious design of reducing the whole to confusion and misery.—For this purpose, he with dark craftiness *concealed himself* in the subtle serpent; and thus made his unsuspected attack upon the woman when alone: perhaps insinuating, that, by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, the serpent had acquired the gift of reason and speech. And indeed we cannot satisfactorily account for the woman's entering into conversation with the serpent, and shewing no marks of surprise or suspicion: unless we admit of some supposition of this nature.

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2 And the woman ſaid unto the ſerpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midſt of the garden, God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of it, neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die.

4 And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die;

5 For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened: and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman ſaw that the tree *was* good for food; and that it *was* pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make *one* wiſe; ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat.

Nothing can be conceived more artful, than Satan's firſt addreſs; "Yea, hath God ſaid, &c.?" it was as if he had ſaid, "Can it be true, which I have heard? Has the "Creator given you appetites, and placed gratifications "before you, only to mock you?—You muſt miſunder-"ſtand his meaning: or ſome envious being has counter-"feited his authority: or at leaſt it muſt be allowed a "very capricious reſtraint." Such inſinuations were artfully couched in this inſidious queſtion: and ſuch objections are continually ſtarted by him and his inſtruments, againſt every reſtriction in the word of God, which calls for our ſelf-denial. And in both caſes it is obſervable, that no notice is taken of the largeneſs of the grant, but merely of its limitation.

V. 2, 3.] The firſt miſtake of the woman conſiſted in attempting to anſwer the enſnaring queſtion propoſed to her: ſhe ought not to have liſtened for a moment to ſuch vile ſuggeſtions; nor to have entered into a parley with one, who aimed at exciting in her mind hard thoughts of God, and of his expreſs commands. When ſhe mentioned the grant of the bountiful Creator, it was not in the expreſſive language in which it had been made; "Of "*every* tree in the garden thou mayſt *freely* eat:" And ſhe added to the reſtriction, "neither ſhall ye touch it." This is, indeed, an excellent caution; we ſhould not come within the attractive force of forbidden objects: yet it ſeems here to be an intimation of the ſeverity of the prohibition. And it was ſaid in the foregoing chapter, "in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt "ſurely die:" but the *date*, and the *undoubted certainty* of the event, are here omitted.—Upon the whole, the poiſon evidently began to work; Eve made too little of the liberal grant of the Creator, ſtated the prohibition in ſtrong terms of ſeverity, and faltered as to the certain, and immediate execution of the threatening.

V. 4, 5.] Perceiving his advantage, the tempter grew bolder, and gave a direct contradiction to the divine denunciation: thus he ſtill tempts men to ſin, promiſing them impunity by his inward ſuggeſtions, and by his agents in whom he lies concealed.—To gain the more credit to his daring aſſertions, he even proceeded to confirm them by an oath; blaſphemouſly calling on God to atteſt his horrid falſhoods; or rather inſinuating that the Lord knew that his own threatening would not be executed; but that on the contrary moſt abundant advantage would accrue to man, from the violation of his Maker's law. So that the author, and the firſt example of perjury, are ſet before us, and a ſpecimen is given of its horrible conſequences, in this firſt aſſault of Satan upon the human ſpecies: and perjurers would do well to look in this glaſs to ſee their own picture, contemplate their own character, and learn whoſe children they are, and whoſe conduct they imitate. The tempter, moreover, promiſed the woman a vaſt advance in knowledge, and an independent felicity, without ſubjection to the will, or dread of the diſpleaſure of a ſuperior: hereby inſinuating, that God forbad them this fruit, in order to keep them in ignorance, and in a mean ſtate of dependence and ſubjection. There is alſo an equivocation in the words: a latent truth, the reverſe of their apparent meaning. "Your eyes," ſays Satan, "ſhall be opened;" that is, when you have eat the fruit, you will too late ſee your own folly: "Ye ſhall be as gods:" revolted from God, and loſing his image and favour, you, in the pride of your hearts, will, as it were, uſurp his throne, affect an independency, ſet up to be your own lords and avengers, demand the homage of flattery and commendation, aſpire at the pinnacle of pre-eminence, attempt to lord it over others, and graſp at the poſſeſſion of all around you: thus you will be left to make trial of your ability to contrive, effect, and ſecure a happineſs to yourſelves, "as if ye were gods," till you find death, and miſery ſeize upon you; "knowing good and evil;" by loſing the good, and experiencing the evil.—Of ſuch a paraphraſe the words will admit; and ſuch have been the effects of eating the forbidden fruit: but nothing could be further from Eve's thoughts than this interpretation.—Thus they reſembled the ancient heathen oracles, of which, in one way or other, this father of lies was the undiſputed author: theſe were generally couched in ſuch ambiguous language, as might afterwards be interpreted to predict the event, though often in direct oppoſition to the diſappointed expectations of the deluded votaries.

V. 6. *Saw*, &c.] Thus began the luſt of the eye, as introductory to the luſt of the fleſh: The woman looked upon the fruit, till ſhe fancied that there would be ſome very extraordinary pleaſure in the taſte of it. As her ear, formed to receive the truth of God, was juſt before opened to admit Satan's lies; ſo now the eye, formed to behold his works, became an inlet to concupiſcence into the heart.—Now firſt the members became, and have ever ſince continued in unconverted men, "inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin." (*Rom.* c. vi. v. 13—19.) That "it was a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe," ſhe had no teſtimony, but that of Satan concealed in the ſerpent; yet ſhe neither heſitated, nor ſuſpected any deluſion: how powerfully did this poiſon operate! She, therefore, at the Serpent's inſtance, "took of the fruit, and did eat," without conſulting Adam, or allowing her-

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they ſewed fig leaves together, and made themſelves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God amongſt the trees of the garden.

ſelf leiſure for conſideration. We may be ſure that Satan is our concealed counſellor, when we are hurried on with ſuch precipitation, as to take no time for reflection, for prayer, or for conſulting grave and prudent friends.—Thus ſhe liſtened to, and parleyed with the tempter, till ſhe was entangled in unbelief: then ſuſpecting the divine veracity and goodneſs, ſhe conceived hopes of impunity in tranſgreſſion, and a gratification both of ambition and of the ſenſual appetite by it: and at length leaning to her own underſtanding, and truſting to her own heart, with confident preſumption ſhe took the forbidden fruit and ate. In this manner was luſt at firſt conceived, then ſin brought forth; and ſin being finiſhed, brought forth death.—And though the ſeveral ſteps may not always be ſo diſcernible; yet there is the ſame concurrence and ſucceſſion in every temptation, by which we are overcome: and it may be pronounced a picture in miniature of all Satan's devices, and of his victories over men in all ages.—Still he inſinuates hard thoughts of God, and his commandments; ſtill he flatters men with hopes of impunity, in direct contradiction to the word of God; ſtill he enhances to the imagination the pleaſure, or advantage of ſinful indulgences; ſtill he pays court to the ſenſual appetite, and to the pride of the heart; and ſtill he entangles men in error, ſeduces them into unbelief, hurries them on with precipitation, and prevails with them to truſt in themſelves, and in their own darkened underſtanding and depraved hearts, to their deſtruction.

But Satan's ſucceſs was yet incomplete: had Adam refuſed to eat, the woman's trangreſſion would have remained with herſelf. It was, indeed, a great point gained, to win her over, whom Adam ſo tenderly loved, and who would employ all her faſcinating influence to prevail on him to follow her example.—Thus he ſtill ſends his temptations by the hands of thoſe, whom we beſt love: and ever ſince men and women have been ſucceſsfully employed as tempters to each other: nor can men be content to ſin alone, but they always endeavour to draw others to the ſame things, into which themſelves have been ſeduced.

Whether Adam ſinned in preſumption, as not ſeeing death immediately inflicted on Eve; or in deſpair, as giving up all for loſt; or overcome by Eve's perſuaſions, does not clearly appear: But the Apoſtle intimates, (1 *Tim.* c. ii. v. 14.) that he was not deceived in the ſame manner and degree as the woman. Conſidering this offence in all its circumſtances, and with all its aggravations, we may term it the prolific parent, and grand examplar of all the tranſgreſſions committed on earth ever ſince.—Whatever there hath been in any ſin, of unbelief, ingratitude, apoſtacy, rebellion, robbery, contempt, defiance, hard thoughts of God, and enmity againſt him: whatever there hath been of idolatry, as comprehending faith in, worſhip of, and obedience to Satan, the god and prince of this world; of exorbitant pride, ſelf-love, and ſelf-will, in affecting that independency, exaltation, and homage, which belong to God; and that inordinate love of the creatures, in ſeeking our happineſs in the poſſeſſion, and enjoyment of them: whatever diſcontent, ſenſual luſt, covetouſneſs, murder and miſchief, were ever yet contained in any one ſin, or all which have been committed upon earth; the whole concentred in this one trangreſſion.—Nor have they been wide of the truth, who have laboured to prove, that all the ten commandments, extenſively and ſpiritually expounded, were at once violated: and the more reaſonable the prohibition, and the more trifling the inducement were, the more aggravated was the offence.—In this manner ſin entered, and Satan triumphed in eſtabliſhing his uſurped authority; "for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage." Thus man apoſtatized, God was provoked, the holy Spirit forſook his polluted temple, the unclean ſpirit took poſſeſſion, the Divine Image was defaced, and Satan's image ſubſtituted in its place: hence the wickedneſs, and miſery of man. "A lamentation it is, and ſhould be:" "yet righteous art thou in all thy judgments, O Lord;" let not the enemy further prevail againſt us, we beſeech thee, by taking hence occaſion to produce in our minds one hard thought of thee, or of thy myſterious judgments!

V. 7. *And their eyes*, &c.] Thus Satan's promiſe began to be accompliſhed.—Their eyes were open to ſee the ſnare, when they were already caught in it: they ſaw alſo miſery before them, with horror and diſmay; and their new diſcoveries were their torment. Their bodily nakedneſs had not previouſly excited the ſenſation of ſhame.—But now being ſtripped of their robe of innocence, and deſpoiled of the ornament of the image of God, the defence of his protection, and the honour of his preſence, they perceived that they were indeed made naked to their ſhame; and their outward nakedneſs appeared an indication of the expoſed and ſhameful condition, to which they were reduced: whilſt their vain attempt to cover themſelves, by fig-leaves *platted* together, repreſents the fruitleſs pains and worthleſs expedients, which men employ to conceal their real character, and hide their ſins from each other, and even from themſelves; for we are naturally more aſhamed of being detected in ſin, than of committing it; and more deſirous of keeping up a good opinion of ourſelves, than of obtaining pardon from God: though we can hide nothing from him, and can neither elude his juſtice, nor recover his favour, by any of our own contrivances.

V. 8. *They heard*, &c.] This ſeems to intimate ſome viſible appearance of the Deity in human form, of which we ſhall hereafter find undeniable inſtances; and which are to be conſidered as anticipations of *his* incarnation, whoſe name is called "The Word of God." If we reverence the phraſeology of the paſſage, as the language of inſpiration, we ſhall not eaſily find any other ſatisfactory ſolution of it. The cool of the day was probably the time of their accuſtomed evening worſhip: when, doubtleſs, they had been uſed to welcome ſuch tokens of the divine preſence with the ſame kind of exulting joy, with

9 And

THE REVᵈ Mᴿ SCOTT'S BIBLE.

GENESIS CH. III. VE. VIII.

C. R. Riley del.

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BRITISH MUSEUM 29 AP 92

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16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out

of his grace in the heart of true christians is enmity, not against the persons of sinners, but against their character, the image of Satan which they bear, and the cause of Satan which they favour: that mind is in them which was in Christ, "who was manifested to destroy the works of "the devil." *Their* character and conduct also, the opposition which they make unto, and the testimony which they bear against, the wickedness of the world; as well as the success which the Lord vouchsafes them, excite the rage, envy, and malice of Satan and of wicked men; whose pride they affront, whose consciences they disturb, whose real characters they detect, and whose iniquity they oppose.—Hence Satan and his seed, by open violence and cruel persecutions, by secret machinations and base slanders, by artful temptations and pernicious heresies, fight against the seed of the woman.—In doing this they bruise his heel; they once crucified the Lord of Glory himself, they have massacred millions of his disciples, and by one means or other are always bringing inward or outward tribulations upon them: yet this is no mortal wound, for it hinders not the final glorification of the whole multitude, who thus in succession have Satan bruised under their feet;—The seed of the woman, fighting under the Redeemer's standard, by the doctrine of truth and the armour of righteousness, accompanied with prayers and patience; in abhorrence of sin and compassion for sinners, carry on their benevolent war; and they gain their most illustrious victories, when the power of Satan is broken, and his deluded servants are converted unto Christ. But their victories are the fruit of *his* severe conflict, and his glorious triumph over the tempter, especially upon the cross; where, in human nature, giving himself a ransom for sinners, he broke the whole force of Satan's usurped empire; and rising from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of the Father, all power in heaven and earth being vested in him, as Mediator between God and man, He is continually employed in crushing the Serpent's head; yet in measure, and order, "according to the purpose of him, who work-"eth all things after the counsel of his own will," (*Eph.* i. 11.) Already by his apostles and ministers he hath shaken the very foundations of his kingdom, and rescued millions of his wretched captives: but ere long he will even on earth gain a more decisive victory; and at last, as it were setting his foot on this serpent's head, he will entirely crush his interests; deprive him of all further power to do mischief; and execute condign punishment on all his seed, in the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. From this short explication we may perceive, that the Person, sufferings, glory, and triumphs of the Redeemer; the character, tribulations, and felicity of the redeemed; the temporary successes, and final ruin of all the enemies of Christ and his people; and indeed almost the whole history of the church, and of the world, through time, and to eternity, are compendiously delineated in this surprising text; which stands, and will stand to the end of time, an internal demonstration that the Scripture was given by inspiration from God.

It is remarkable that this gracious revelation of a Saviour was given unsolicited, and previous to any humiliation on the part of man. Without a revelation of mercy, inspiring *some hope of forgiveness*, the convinced sinner would be hardened in desperation: this promise therefore formed that encouragement to hope, which was productive of true repentance and true religion, (as it is generally supposed,) in fallen Adam and Eve.

V. 16. *Unto the woman*, &c.] No degree of pain or sorrow would have been connected with pregnancy, or child-bearing, had not sin been committed: but the Lord threatened to multiply the woman's sorrows; *even those of her conception:* so that now, in a world of suffering, the pains and sorrows of the female sex are greatly multiplied indeed, almost beyond expression; which was an additional burden laid upon the woman, as the first transgressor and the tempter of her husband. It might, therefore, have been expected, that when such sorrows had been foretold as attendants on bearing children, the female sex would generally have preferred the single state, and thus have prevented the increase of the human species: but God, according to the probable meaning of the expression here used, hath so constituted the human heart, that marriage notwithstanding is generally chosen even by the suffering sex. Moreover, the authority of the husband, when exercised uniformly with wisdom and tenderness, would have increased mutual felicity: but, by the entrance of sin, it is too often converted into unreasonable and unfeeling despotism, and becomes an additional source of misery to many unhappy females; and they too being sinners, are equally prone to neglect the duties of their station, which occasions a still greater increase of misery and distraction. To prevent which, submission in things lawful is here commanded, notwithstanding this change in the conduct of the husband, which seems also to be predicted. 'It is well,' says Mr. Henry on this passage, "that enmity was not put between the 'man and woman, in the manner that it is betwixt her 'seed and that of the serpent.'

V. 17—19.] That, which Adam had pleaded as an extenuation of his crime, was adduced as the reason of his punishment; instead of hearkening to the voice of God, he had hearkened to her voice, whom God had appointed him to counsel and command, not to obey. Thus the mouth of sinners shall be stopped, and all their excuses turned against them. Yet the Lord did not denounce

out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; for she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skin, and clothed them.

22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever;

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

CHAP.

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denounce a curse on him, and his seed, having before given imitations of rich blessings intended for them: but he cursed the ground for his sake; that, as he transgressed in eating the forbidden fruit, so he might be chastised, in the labour and sorrow connected with his future sustenance.

In consequence of this curse, useless and noxious weeds and plants spring up spontaneously, and grow and multiply with immense rapidity.—These must be eradicated, the soil prepared, and much labour bestowed, before the precious fruits of the earth can be obtained: hence incessant fatigue, pain, and penury, are the lot of the bulk of mankind; which had not been the case in any degree, had not sin occasioned it. The weight of this part of the sentence falls chiefly upon the man, to whom it is addressed; as that of the former on the woman. But even this curse prevents still greater evil than it occasions, as things are circumstanced; and in the event proves salutary to mankind.—Let it be noted, that men being condemned to hard labour as criminals, they, who live without any kind of useful employment, rebel against the sentence. Nor was any respite, or termination of this labour and sorrow, to be expected; till death should consign the body to the earth again, to mingle with its original dust.—As we feel that this sentence, in every part, is in full force against the whole human species; it is absurd to deny that we were all joined in the covenant with Adam, our common representative. But let us also remember, that as the sentence upon the serpent couched, under its outward meaning, the threatening of vengeance upon the invisible tempter: so the death denounced against the body, which is but the instrument of unrighteousness, comprehends also the awful punishment, prepared for the soul; which is the deviser, and real agent of every sin.—This is evinced by the sinful propensities of the human race, compared with the threatenings of wrath to come against every soul of man that doeth evil; for our nature too is fallen under the curse for Adam's sake, and produces only sinful desires, purposes, words, and actions, unless it be renewed by divine grace. So that we are concluded under sin and wrath, and none but Jesus, the Mediator of another covenant, can deliver us.—Thus He, "the second Adam, the Lord from heaven," as our Surety, was under *subjection*, made a *curse* for us; *laboured* hard through his sorrowful life; *sweat* blood in the garden, endured the *travail* of his soul; and at length expired on the cross, and was laid in the grave; that he might bear every part of the sentence deserved by man's sin, and so finally save the whole multitude of his believing people.

V. 20. *Eve*, &c.] That is *life* or *living*. This name seems to have been given in faith: Adam thankfully accepted the reprieve, which was comprehended in the sentence; and looked forward to the increase of the human species with submissive satisfaction, notwithstanding its attendant miseries; because he by faith embraced the promise of that future Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head.

V. 21. *Coats of skins*, &c.] Some conjecture from this circumstance, that a considerable time had elapsed between the creation and the fall, and that the animals had already begun to increase, or none could have been spared to be slain: but it is mere conjecture, as are all other opinions upon this subject, in which God hath not been pleased to gratify our curiosity. It is more obvious and useful to observe, that probably some beasts, by God's command slain in sacrifice, furnished these skins, with which they were clothed: and as Adam and Eve had never, we may be sure, slain any animals before the fall; and as we have no reason to suppose that any died of themselves; so it is hard to conceive in what other way these skins could be procured. This would very aptly typify the promised Seed, who suffered for our sins, that we might stand accepted with God in and by his righteousness: and the circumstance of the Lord God *making* these coats of skins, and *clothing* them, not only intimates the kind instruction and assistance, which he afforded them, in accommodating themselves to their present situation; but represents to us, that the Saviour and salvation are of his providing, and that faith, which receives and puts on Christ, is his gift, and must be sought and received from him.

V. 22—24.] (*Note*, i. 26.) The Lord was pleased to point out the sad change, that had taken place; by thus alluding to their ambitious desire, and vain expectation of being as gods; and to their woeful disappointment. As Adam had forfeited the blessing of *immortality*, it was very proper that he should be deprived of the sacramental pledge of it. This by no means proves, that the fruit of the tree of life had any *inherent* efficacy of conferring immortality: it rather reflected upon their folly, who had been deluded to believe that the fruit of the tree of knowledge possessed one of a similar nature. After their expulsion from the garden of Eden, some august angelic guards, with a visible appearance, and the similitude of a flaming sword, forbad all entrance into it, or access to the tree of life: this signified, that *according to the covenant*, which was sealed by that tree, God's favour and eternal life were for ever unattainable by fallen man.

PRAC-

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. The birth of Cain and Abel, 1, 2. *2d. Abel's offering accepted, and Cain's rejected; Cain's subsequent displeasure, and murder of his brother,* 3—8. *3d. His conviction, condemnation, banishment, and consequent behaviour,* 9—17. *4th. His descendents to Lamech, with some particulars of him and his children,* 18—24. *5th. The birth of Seth,* 25, 26.

AND Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he brought also of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering:

5 But

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In deducing practical instruction from this important part of Scripture, the only difficulty lies in selection: for much must be omitted; as almost the whole of revealed religion might be drawn from it.—The subject calls upon us to lament and mourn; not so much for these primitive transgressors, as for ourselves, our children, and the whole human race, thus involved in one common ruin: But at the same time it reminds us to rejoice in God our Saviour, from whom come everlasting righteousness and felicity. Yet it behoves us to rejoice with trembling, lest we should come short of, or be found to neglect, such great salvation, through the deceitfulness of our hearts, and the sinfulness of the world; and above all through the subtlety of our watchful, unwearied, and malicious enemies, the powers of darkness; who are still envious of our happiness, and covertly plotting our destruction.—Whenever our pride is flattered, or discontent, ambition, affectation of independence, covetousness, or sensual lusts are excited in our minds; when we are ready to promise ourselves impunity in or advantage from sin; when hard thoughts of God and his commandments, doubts about his veracity and faithfulness, or low apprehensions of the value of his favour and of spiritual blessings, are suggested; and when we are urged forward with precipitation and self-confidence, contemning counsel, and not brooking opposition: Then we may be sure the old serpent is at work; and we are especially called to watch and pray; and our only safety consists in speedy flight, or vigorous resistance stedfast in the faith. We should not only be upon our guard against avowed enemies, or wicked people: but we must reject temptations to unbelief or disobedience, though sent by the hands of the most lovely, or beloved object upon earth; recognizing the tempter as concealed in it, and with indignation answering, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for so "it is written."—Nay if our own senses, or understandings seem to testify, that forbidden objects are good and desirable, we must reject that testimony, if we would be safe and happy.—Nor let it be forgotten that the desire of knowledge is as liable to exorbitancy, as the sensual appetites; and when not subjected to, and restricted by, the word of God, degenerates into bold curiosity, scepticism, and infidelity.—The triumphs of prosperous wickedness are short-lived, and issue in redoubled vengeance; and agreement in sin often produces the most bitter recriminations, and most implacable enmities.—Upon the face of this transaction it is manifest that we are capable of ruining, but not of saving ourselves; and that the contrivance and proposal *at least* of salvation go before, not only our deservings and endeavours, but even our desires and expectations. Had not therefore the Judge of men been previously revealed as the Saviour of sinners, we must all have stood self-convicted and trembling before him, to hear the aweful sentence of everlasting condemnation. If notwithstanding the light of revelation, and the hope of salvation, the world, ever since the fall, hath been full of darkness, sin, and misery; what would it then have been, had the Lord finally withdrawn from his apostate creatures? And if temporal evils excite such lamentation, what will the wrath to come be? The believer is taught to consider the former as fatherly chastisements, tokens of love, light afflictions, and but for a moment; and is enabled to submit to them, and to death itself, with chearfulness, in the hope of everlasting glory: but the latter is reserved, as the portion of the enemies of God. Hoping in the merits of Christ and the blood of the everlasting covenant, of which he is the faithful Surety, let us lie low before him in humiliation for sin, and gratitude for salvation; let us labour and suffer patiently; resist temptation manfully, and obey his commands chearfully: not only expecting that he will bruise satan under *our feet* shortly; but that he will in due time crush the serpent's head completely, and fill the earth with truth and righteousness.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *I have,* &c.] Some think that Eve concluded this to be the promised Seed, and called him, The MAN JEHOVAH. If so, she was woefully disappointed.

V. 3, 4.] This early use of sacrifices confirms the supposition, that the appointment of them was a part of the gracious revelation made to Adam after his transgression.—It is indeed exceeding difficult, in any other way, to account for the very general use of altars and sacrifices, in order to appease the anger of the offended Deity; which at first sight appears so unreasonable. But if God commanded Adam after the fall, to shed the blood of *innocent* animals, and after their death to consume part, or the whole, of their bodies by fire; representing the merited punishment of sin, by the death of the body, and the wrath of God in a future state, (of which the fire is a well-known emblem) and prefiguring the sufferings of Christ: In this case the whole appears very natural; the original tradition was remembered, and the method of expiation practised, long after the meaning of it

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PHYSICAL OBSERVATIONS

CHAP. IV.

Before Christ 4004.

GENESIS.

NOTES

CHAP. IV.

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C. R. Ryley del. *Tilloch sculp.*

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5 But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not reſpect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the LORD ſaid unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doeſt not well, ſin lieth at the door. And unto thee *ſhall be* his deſire, and thou ſhalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to paſs when they were in the field, that Cain roſe up againſt Abel his brother, and ſlew him.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he ſaid, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

10 And he ſaid, What haſt thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now *art* thou curſed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

12 When thou tilleſt the ground, it ſhall not henceforth yield unto thee her ſtrength. A fugitive and a vagabond ſhalt thou be on the earth.

13 And

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it was obſcured and forgotten.—Cain ſeems to have approached God in a way of his own deviſing, and in his own name, without the acknowledgment of his ſinfulneſs, or dependence on the promiſed Saviour; not to ſupplicate mercy, but only to render his tribute for providential bleſſings. In ſo doing he manifeſted a proud, impenitent, unbelieving heart; and intimated his purpoſe of adhering to the covenant of works: therefore he and his offering were rejected. But Abel came as a ſinner, according to God's appointment; his offering expreſſed humility, ſincerity, and believing obedience: and as he thus ſought the mercy of the new covenant, through the promiſed Seed, he was graciouſly accepted; and his ſacrifice was diſtinguiſhed by ſome manifeſt token of divine approbation; probably it was conſumed by fire from heaven; (1 *Kings*, xviii. 23—29. 36—39. 2 *Chron.* vii. 1;) which intimated, that the deſerved vengeance conſuming the ſacrifice, way was made for the exerciſe of mercy to the offender. We know that *by faith* Abel "offered a more excellent ſacrifice than "Cain:" and in all ages two ſuch deſcriptions of worſhippers have been found, as we ſuppoſe Cain and Abel to have been; namely, proud deſpiſers of ſalvation by faith in the blood of Chriſt, who have attempted to pleaſe God by following their own devices; and humble believers, who have found acceptance in the Lord's appointed way, and patiently endured the envy, hatred, and perſecution, to which this expoſed them.

V. 5—7.] Cain, inſtead of humbly enquiring the cauſe of his rejection, indulged the moſt malignant reſentment againſt Abel; and even harboured an evil ſpirit of diſcontent, rebellion, and enmity againſt God himſelf; which tormenting paſſions were, as they are wont to be, ſtrongly marked upon his ſullen, downcaſt countenance. But the Lord condeſcended to expoſtulate with his rebellious creature; and intimated to him, that he had no cauſe of diſſatisfaction; that the hypocriſy of his heart, and the unwarranted method of his approach, had indeed *deſervedly* excluded him from ſharing his gracious approbation; but that, if he would now come in another temper, and in the preſcribed way, he alſo ſhould meet with acceptance. He further warned him, that "ſin lay at the door;" that the indulgence of his malignant paſſions would open the way to the commiſſion of greater crimes, which would expoſe him to deeper condemnation. Nor had he any cauſe for diſcontent or reſentment; ſeeing Abel ſtill loved him, and was ready to obey him as his elder brother, as he had done before. (Note, iii. 16.)

V. 8, 9.] It ſeems that Cain concealed his murderous hatred under the maſk of cordial affection, and entered into familiar converſe with his brother; till he had drawn him into the field, at a diſtance from Adam and Eve, and ſo obtained the opportunity of ſlaying him. But immediately the Lord, manifeſting his preſence by ſome external appearance, called him to account for his conduct, (as he had formerly done Adam and Eve;) enquiring of him, where his *brother* Abel was? And his anſwer accorded to the idea before ſuggeſted of his pride and unbelief: He denied that he knew where Abel was! as if he could conceal his crime from God himſelf! and he inſolently demanded, if he were his brother's keeper! I know not whether we are to conſider this as an almoſt atheiſtical denial of God's omniſcience, or a rejection of his authority, and defiance of his omnipotence; but it plainly ſhews how ſin hardens the heart, and blinds the underſtanding.

V. 10—12.] Thus God called upon Cain to reflect upon the horrid nature and aggravated circumſtances of his crime, and the vengeance due to him, to awaken remorſe, and alarm his fears.—Here was in this one action, undeſerved hatred, and unprovoked revenge producing premeditated murder, whilſt men were yet few in number, and probably none had hitherto died: the murder of a brother, in cruel diſregard to their common parents; for no other reaſon, but the excellency of his character, and God's acceptance of him; which evidenced a malignant hatred of holineſs, and a daring contempt of, and determined enmity to, God himſelf.—The juſtice and holineſs of God, and his authority as Governor of the univerſe, render it ſo ſuitable and proper for him to puniſh offenders, that they, who ſuffer flagrant wrong, are often ſpoken of in Scripture, as loudly calling upon him, and as it were demanding of him, to execute vengeance upon their injurers.—And as he witneſſes thoſe ſecret crimes, which elude the juſtice of men: ſo thoſe crimes themſelves are repreſented as having a voice, which loudly calls upon the Judge of all, to whom vengeance belongs, to puniſh the perpetrators of them: which he

13 And Cain said unto the LORD, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch; and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Jabel: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle.

21 And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

24 If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold.

25 And

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accounts himself in honour bound to, and therefore most assuredly he will do it.—Thus Abel's blood called, as with a loud voice, to the Lord to punish the cruel murderer: and Cain's enormous crime exposed him to so aweful and deserved a curse, that the very elements were ready to rise up in arms against him, to be the Creator's instruments of vengeance; and the earth would withhold her wonted increase, because he had forced her to drink the blood of righteous Abel. There is vast majesty and energy, in the personification of the inanimate creatures, and representing them as uniting against Cain: who would in consequence be so dreaded, and detested by others; and the sight of him must be so grievous to Adam and Eve; that he was, as it were, driven from society. It appears that Adam and Eve had many more children, than are mentioned by name; and that there were at this time a considerable number of inhabitants in the earth: probably Abel was not killed, till within a short time of the birth of Seth, which was when Adam was an hundred and thirty years of age, during which space mankind might be much increased.

V. 13—15.] Cain expressed no humiliation for the greatness of his sin, but complained of the severity of his punishment; which is the universal effect of an impenitent heart. He represented that he should be left destitute of the providential protection of God, as a kind of outlaw: yet the Lord intended not that he should be slain; but that he should live a monument and witness of his abhorrence of murder.—It is in vain for us to enquire what the mark was which God set upon him; it was doubtless well known to the parties concerned, both as a brand of infamy on Cain, and as a token from God that they should not kill him.

V. 16, 17.] Cain seems to have renounced entirely the ordinances of God, and the society of his worshippers, and those places, where there were some sensible tokens of his presence and acceptance. Thus becoming openly irreligious, he employed himself in building; probably to divert his mind from serious reflections, and remorse of conscience; to attach to himself some adherents, and get a name in one way, as he had forfeited his reputation in another. Ungodly Cain was the first that we read of, who builded a city: and his posterity invented many useful and ingenious arts. (20, 21, 22.) The servants of God, who are most attentive to the one thing needful, are not *generally* the most eminent in natural ingenuity and industry.

V. 19. *Lamech took two wives.*] This is the first instance which we have of polygamy, and is not suited to impress us much in its favour.—I use the word *polygamy* in the popular sense, for more wives than one at a time: though strictly speaking this is *bigamy*.

V. 23, 24.] Lamech appears to have been either suspicious of his wives, or desirous of obviating *their* apprehensions for his safety: it seems plain that he was conscious of having many enemies, whose resentment he had provoked by injuries of one kind or other: Whether, therefore, he spake affirmatively, and acknowledged that he had killed a man, though not his own brother; or interrogatively, "Have I killed a man to my hurt?" he evidently drew a comparison betwixt himself and his ancestor Cain; and flattered himself that he was much less criminal: and he therefore abused the patience of God in sparing Cain, into an encouragement to himself to expect impunity in sin; and to dare and defy the vengeance of those, who hated him.

V. 25.

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth; For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

CHAP. V.

Contains 1st. A retrospect to the Creation, and to the birth of Seth, 1—3. 2d. A genealogy through Seth from Adam to Enoch, with his piety, and translation, 4—24. 3d. The genealogy continued to Noah, with an account of him and his sons, 25—32.

THIS *is* the book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat *a son* in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

4 And

V. 25. *Another seed*, &c.] Eve had probably some intimation that this son was to be the progenitor of the promised Seed.

V. 26. *To call upon*, &c.] Or, to call themselves by the name of the Lord: that is, some persons, by an open profession of true religion, began to protest against the prevailing impiety and wickedness of the world around them

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promises of God shall surely be accomplished; but the appointed season must be waited for: and hasty expectations often end in bitter disappointments.—Acceptance with God cannot be obtained, but in the way of his appointment; and unbelief, pride, and hypocrisy, are as ruinous as open ungodliness itself.—When we fail of success in our undertakings, or comfort in religious exercises; instead of indulging discontent and envy, we should diligently search out and remove the sinful cause; for though we have failed in one instance, we may afterwards succeed: but if we give place to the devil by harbouring resentment, we know not whither we may be hurried.—What fatal effects were these of our first parents' transgression! and how must *their* hearts have been tortured with variegated anguish at such events! What remained in Cain of the image and likeness of God? Was he very good? Nay have we not in him the very image of Satan; pride, envy, malice, murder, lies, enmity against God, insolence towards him, and final apostacy from him!—As divine truth embraced in faith is the appointed means of our recovering, *from glory to glory*, the image of God: so Satan's lies, when believed, produce his very nature in the soul. But "Abel being dead, yet speaketh:" not only proclaiming the heinousness of murder, and warning us to stifle the first emotions of wrath; for malice in the heart is the embryo of actual murder: but also teaching us, that the believer's happiness is not in this world; that persecution must be expected by the righteous, even on account of their righteousness; and that there is a future state, and an eternal recompence to be enjoyed by them, through faith in Christ, and his atoning sacrifice.—When "Cain, who was of that wicked one, slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous;" (1 John iii. 12.) then, in consequence of the enmity put between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the war broke out; which, in one way or other, hath been waged ever since: and Cain may be considered as the father, the patron, and the archetype of proud Pharisees, formal worshippers, and bloody persecutors of every age and nation, from the beginning to the end of the world. In this war we are all concerned, none are neuter; for our Captain hath declared, "He that is not with me, is *against* me." Under his banners therefore let us enlist, and not be fearful and unbelieving, but take up our cross and follow him: and with all the forces we can muster, decidedly, yet in meekness, let us support the cause of truth and righteousness, against Satan and his servants; and should we here meet with persecution even unto death, he will certainly give us the crown of everlasting life: for "to him that overcometh, will he give to sit down with him upon his throne even as he hath overcome, and has sat down with his Father upon his throne." These are the better things, which the blood of Jesus speaketh, than did that of Abel; who was a type of him, both in the righteousness of his life, and the manner of his death: but his blood called for vengeance upon him who shed it; whilst the blood of Christ pleads before the throne for pardon and peace, grace and glory to those, whose sins were the procuring cause of his death. But, on the contrary, what will it avail the sinner, to deny or excuse his crimes? to quarrel against, or blaspheme, the justice of his Maker? or impiously to spend the space of the Lord's long-suffering in worldly projects, or in making himself eminent among, or terrible to, his fellow-creatures? For the wrath of God abideth on him; his curse will poison all his enjoyments; and heaven, earth, and hell, will speedily, as it were, combine in effecting his everlasting destruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1, 2.] Adam was not only the name of the first man, but also that of the species: it is supposed to have been derived from the red colour of the earth, out of which his body was formed; and to have been given him, to remind him, and us, of the original of our bodies in comparison with that of our immortal souls.

V. 3. *In his own likeness*, &c.] The contrast between Adam created in the likeness of God; (1.) and Seth begotten in the likeness of Adam after the fall, is very remarkable.—Seth was not only the father of the holy seed before the flood, but of the whole human race ever since; and consequently the ancestor of Christ. Adam and Eve were *personally* pardoned, and recovered to holiness, as it is generally allowed: but Adam was no longer our Representative, as he had been when he transgressed

the

4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat ſons and daughters.

5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:

7 And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and ſeven years, and begat ſons and daughters:

8 And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

9 And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:

10 And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat ſons and daughters:

11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

12 And Cainan lived ſeventy years and begat Mahalaleel.

13 And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat ſons and daughters:

14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

15 And Mahalaleel lived ſixty and five years, and begat Jared:

16 And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat ſons and daughters:

17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

18 And Jared lived an hundred ſixty and two years, and he begat Enoch.

19 And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat ſons and daughters.

20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred ſixty and two years: and he died.

21 And Enoch lived ſixty and five years, and begat Methuſelah.

22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuſelah three hundred years, and begat ſons and daughters.

23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred ſixty and five years.

24 And Enoch walked with God, and he *was* not; for God took him.

25 And

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the covenant: therefore he communicated to his poſterity that nature which he had as a ſinner, not the new nature which he had as a believer.—Seth alſo ſeems to have been a godly perſon; yet *not as born of Adam; but as born again of the Spirit.* And this was noted eſpecially in him; leſt Cain's wickedneſs ſhould be aſcribed to other cauſes, and Abel's righteouſneſs to the *goodneſs of his natural diſpoſition*, and not to the grace of God, as it is common in ſimilar caſes.—But the character and conduct of all Seth's poſterity, (Chriſt alone excepted), unleſs, or until, *born of God*, plainly teſtify what that image was, in which he was begotten.

V. 22—24.] *Walking with God* is a figurative deſcription of that intimate communion which ſubſiſts between a merciful God and true believers, which it may be uſeful to explain: "Can two walk together except they "be agreed?" (*Amos*, iii. 3.) Without coincidence in ſentiment, judgment, and diſpoſition, there can be no cordial union or harmony. But man is naturally propenſe to thoſe things which God abhors and forbids; and averſe to thoſe that God loves and commands. His underſtanding is ſo darkened, his judgment ſo perverted, his affections ſo depraved, and his taſte ſo vitiated, by ſin; that in almoſt every thing his views, his choice, his deſires, and purſuits, are the reverſe of thoſe, which the word of God propoſes to him. Being thus diſpoſed, he departs from and walks contrary to God, contracts guilt, and merits condemnation. A ſinner's walk with God, therefore, commences with the change of his judgment and diſpoſition by divine grace: then he begins to abhor and repent of his ſins; to deſpiſe the world in compariſon of the favour of God; to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; to ſeek forgiveneſs and acceptance with God, in the way of his appointment; and to devote himſelf to his love and ſervice, and the purſuit of holineſs. Having been thus reconciled to God, he walks with him in the continual exerciſe of repentance, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in an habitual realizing ſenſe of, and regard to, the preſence of God in his whole conduct; in a daily dependence on his promiſe, providence, and grace for all things needful for ſoul and body; in a continual attention to his word, that from thence he may learn his truth and will, and derive the peace and comfort of his ſalvation; in pouring out the heart before the Lord in fervent prayer and grateful praiſe; in a believing, reverential, and delightful attendance on all the ordinances of his worſhip, and an open profeſſion of his faith and love; in a conſcientious obedience to all his commandments, without regarding the praiſe or cenſure of men; in ſubmiſſion to his providential appointments; and finally, in an habitual endeavour by attention to every relative obligation, by a careful improvement of every talent, and by a circumſpect converſation, to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in "all things," and to recommend religion to all around him. The Lord, on his part, anſwers the expectations of thoſe, who thus walk with him: in his providence he ſupplies their wants, interpoſes in their emergencies, and evidences his care of them; he meets them in his ordinances

CHAP. V.

25 And Methuſelah lived an hundred eighty and ſeven years, and begat Lamech.

26 And Methuſelah lived after he begat Lamech ſeven hundred eighty and two years, and begat ſons and daughters.

27 And all the days of Methuſelah were nine hundred ſixty and nine years: and he died.

28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a ſon.

29 And he called his name Noah, ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the LORD hath curſed.

30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat ſons and daughters.

31 And all the days of Lamech were ſeven hundred ſeventy and ſeven years: and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

CHAP.

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ordinances, teaches them from his word, anſwers their prayers, accepts their ſervices, communicates by his Spirit wiſdom, ſtrength, and conſolation to their ſouls, and is indeed their Guide, Companion, and Counſellor through life: and at length he meets them at death, and takes them into his preſence, where is fulneſs of joy. Thus ends the walk of faith; for thenceforth they walk by ſight, and ſee him as He is; being for ever with God, and like him, in holineſs and felicity. But Enoch was an exception to the general rule; for "He was tranſlated "that he ſhould not ſee death." (*Heb.* xi. 5, 6.) In the prime of life, according to thoſe times, he was taken from earth to Heaven, in the body, without feeling the pangs of death, having received this teſtimony, that he had pleaſed God.—Therefore he was not found on earth, either by his friends, who ſought him from love; (2 *Kings*, ii. 16—18;) or by his enemies, who ſought him in the murderous rage of perſecution: for he was a preacher of righteouſneſs; and if we may judge by the ſpecimen (*Jude*, 14, 15,) his plain, bold, and alarming addreſs could not fail greatly to enrage the daring ſinners to whom he was ſent. But by taking him alive into Heaven, God effectually reſcued him from their malice, teſtified his approbation of his conduct, and gave a convincing proof of the inviſible world, and of the future ſtate of recompence.

V. 29. *Noah*, &c.] *Noah* ſignifies *reſt*, or refreſhing: Perhaps Lamech thought that he had obtained the promiſed Seed.—But it is more likely that he ſpake by the Spirit of prophecy, which revealed to him that Noah would be an extraordinary perſon, and a great bleſſing to mankind; not without reference to the preſervation of the human ſpecies with him in the ark; which typified the ſalvation of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt; our true and only effectual comfort amidſt the toils and miſeries of life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This is nearly all the hiſtory, which God hath been pleaſed to tranſmit to us, of the antediluvian world, that ſubſiſted for the ſpace of 1656 years. Conſidering how long men lived and had children before the flood, we may well ſuppoſe that the earth was filled with inhabitants: and we may with apparent probability conjecture, that there were many flouriſhing kingdoms amongſt them; many revolutions in ſtates, many mighty atchievements, and renowned characters, which are all buried in oblivion: whilſt nothing is recorded but what relates to the holy ſeed, amongſt whom true religion was maintained; and who doubtleſs were deſpiſed and hated in their generation. In the judgment of God, the ſaints are the only excellent and eminent perſons, and true religion the only important concern, on earth: compared with theſe, all things elſe are ſcarcely worth mentioning. We have no reaſon to wonder on account of the longevity of the Antedeluvians; nor is it needful to perplex ourſelves about the ſecond cauſes, which conduced to prolong their days: for nothing but the power of God, "in whom we "live, and move, and have our being," could preſerve the curious fabric of the human body in repair, for the few years which we live; and the ſame power ſuffices to preſerve it to the age of Methuſelah, or for ever. Man lives as long as his Creator pleaſes, and no longer; which ſhould warn us not to provoke him, and teach us to make haſte to be at peace with him, and to live prepared for and expecting our ſummons.—Nor have we any cauſe to regret the ſhortneſs of our preſent lives: Abel and Enoch, the two moſt favoured characters, before the flood, were removed from the earth at an earlier period than any others, whoſe hiſtory is tranſmitted to us. Were the world leſs miſerable, it could be no loſs to die, and go to Heaven; nor can it ever be gain to live, and treaſure up wrath by ſin: and as their length of life encouraged procraſtination, and increaſed preſumption; ſo the ſhortneſs of our days may warn us, without delay, to hearken to the voice of God in the Goſpel.—But man, in his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity: he is born, raiſes up a family, and dies! Theſe are his memoirs: all elſe is a cypher, or a blot, except he WALK WITH GOD.—The page of hiſtory records the ſplendid actions of the great, and illuſtrious: the report of the day proclaims the wealth which others have accumulated, left behind, and are gone to render an account of: the monuments of the dead are often inſcribed with pompous titles and flattering commendations.—But may it be *with truth* engraved on my tombſtone, or whiſpered in the obſcureſt corner, "He walked "with God, and was not, for God took him;" and ſo far from envying their diſtinctions, nor even Enoch's privilege ſhall be anxiouſly deſired: but, as one expreſſes it, (Doddridge's Hymns)—

"I'll hail the ſharpeſt pangs of death,
"Which break my way to God."

We may alſo obſerve that they, who begin young to walk with God, may expect to walk with him long, comfortably, and uſefully: and the true chriſtian's perſeverance in holineſs, through many a year, till God

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. The improper marriages of God's professed people, the increase of wickedness, the notice God took of it, his indignation, and the destruction which he determined upon, 1—7. 2d. Noah approved of God, warned of an approaching deluge, and instructed to prepare for it, 8—21. 3d. His implicit obedience, 22.

AND it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3 And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them; the same *became* mighty men, which *were* of old, men of renown.

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And

takes him, will best evince and illustrate the holy tendency of that doctrine, which many oppose, and many abuse.—But walking with God requires no monkish celibacy and solitude: it well consists with the cares and comforts, and much consists in the conscientious performance of the duties, of social and relative life.—However, we need better comforters under our toil and sorrow, than the dearest relations, and most promising offspring: may we then seek and find the comforts of faith in Christ, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *The sons of God*, &c.] All the true worshippers of God are his sons and daughters: and sometimes the appellation is extended to all those, who profess the true religion.—So that they who were called by the name of the Lord, from unworthy motives intermarried with those that were openly irreligious; who are here called the daughters of men; which produced, as it always hath done, an increase of wickedness and an almost universal apostacy.

V. 3. *My Spirit*, &c.] This seems to mean, that the holy Spirit (from whose influences all that is good, tends to good, or checks the torrent of ungodliness, is derived) would at length finally leave these sinners; being provoked by their obstinate iniquity, not only against their own consciences, but in despite of his convictions: and that they would then become totally hardened in sin, and ripe for destruction; and God would no longer exercise patience towards them. For man was not only frail and feeble, but carnal and corrupt; and had prostituted the powers of his rational soul, and sacrificed every noble consideration, to "make provison for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof:" so that he was become altogether incapable of answering the great end of his creation. Yet the Lord was pleased to give notice that he would wait 120 years before he executed his purposed vengeance; that men might have space for repentance, and to use proper methods of averting his terrible indignation. (*Rom.* viii. 1—13. *Gal.* v. 17—21.)

V. 4. *Giants.*] Men of great stature and strength, but of more enormous wickedness; who were mighty men, and men of renown, as chieftains and conquerors.

V. 5. *God saw*, &c.] The words of this verse are very expressive—"God saw the wickedness of man to be great "on the earth."—He, who could not mistake, or form a false estimate, saw that it was very great; that is open, daring, almost universal; of all men, all over the earth. Yet he saw the heart still worse:—"Every imagination "of the thoughts of the heart were only evil continually:" that is, the workings of the fancy, the contrivances of the understanding, the purposes, desires, and affections of the whole soul, were every one of them *evil, only evil*, without any intermixture of good;—only evil, continually, without interruption or cessation! Alas! how few persons are aware that this is the case with themselves, and with all men, as long as they remain destitute of the sanctifying grace of God! Inattention, ignorance of the law of God, and self-flattery, hide this mortifying truth from men's minds, and prejudice them against it; but the perception of it is essentially necessary to a proper valuation of the salvation of the Gospel.

V. 6. *It repented—it grieved*, &c.] Such expressions as these are made use of by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, in a gracious condescension to our low apprehensions; and to accommodate heavenly things, as far as their nature will admit of it, to the similitude of earthly things: just as we speak to the children in an imitation of their language, and in accommodation to their capacities, that we may better convey our meaning into their minds.—"I speak after the manner of men, because of "the weakness of your flesh." Metaphysical truth is too refined and subtile for the instruction of mankind, and only fitted for the amusement of a few ingenious, speculative men: but the Scriptures were written to make even the poor and illiterate wise unto salvation. To speak to them of the *cause* from its *sensible* and *visible* effects, more readily informs, and more deeply interests them: whilst abundance of other passages guard the sober enquirer from misapprehension.—Should an artist, after bestowing much pains, and manifesting great skill, about some curious piece of mechanism, dash it to pieces; we should conclude *from this effect*, that he repented of having made it:—Should a parent, after conferring great favours upon his child, be provoked by his mis-

conduct

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

9 These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.

10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15 And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: the length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof: *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it.

17 And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.

18 But

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conduct finally to disinherit him; we should thence infer, that he was grieved at his heart that he had bestowed so much upon him. Thus the Creator, having formed the earth and men upon it; having displayed so much his wisdom, power, and goodness in the works, which he had made for, and the riches he had conferred upon, man, in whom especially his glory had shone; after all, when the earth was filled with inhabitants, was provoked, by their wickedness to destroy them all with a flood: This was an effect, which seemed to flow from his *repenting* that he had made man, and to indicate that he was grieved at his heart.—It is indeed impossible that God should *really* be sorry for, or repent of, any thing that he hath done: but his change of conduct was such, as in men springs from such causes: and the expression most emphatically denotes his extreme abhorrence of their crimes.

V. 8. *But*, &c.] Noah was an exception to the general rule, a true believer, a partaker of the grace of God, and an object of his special favour. He was inwardly, sincerely, and unreservedly religious; one that dared to be singular in that corrupt generation.

V. 11, 12.] The earth was not only full of daring impiety before God, and as it were in defiance of him; but also of oppression, cruelty, and murder: so that men in general had corrupted their way, all over the world. Noah's godliness was mentioned as the effect of the grace of God: but the wickedness of the rest is ascribed to themselves. This is the Scripture distribution of this matter; and christian simplicity will be satisfied with it, and enquire no farther.

V. 13. *With the earth*, &c.] With all the animal tribes, and all the vegetable riches, with which it was replenished; and with all the works of men, which had been planned, and finished on it, as cities, palaces, &c; so as to render the whole one universal desolation.

V. 14—16.] The ark seems to have been built, like the hulk of a ship, but roofed as an house: it was divided into many little cabins for its intended inhabitants; pitched within and without to keep it tight and sweet; and lighted at the upper part. As a cubit was something more than half a yard; so this enormous vessel was about 160 yards long, 27 in width, and 16 in height. Without entering into any further enquiries concerning it, it must at first sight appear that so large a vessel, thus constructed, and with so few persons on board, was utterly unsuitable to weather out such a storm; except as it was immediately under the guidance and protection of the Almighty. But it was to be built in faith; and for this very reason, was more suitable for the intended purpose.

V. 17. *And behold I, even I*, &c.] It might appear very difficult, and to all created power impossible, thus to deluge the whole earth; but God himself engaged his almighty arm to effect it, and that obviated all objections. These were things not seen at yet, concerning which Noah was warned, and of which there was no human probability: and some have since ventured to deny, and perhaps some at that time would argue against, the possibility of such a deluge. But Noah simply credited the word of God, and neither hesitated to expect the improbable and unprecedented catastrophe of the event predicted; nor objected to the justice, or goodness of God in the awful sentence; nor declined the immense labour and expence of such a building, or the reproach and ridicule to which it might expose him; nor excepted to this mode of preservation. But being moved with fear, and reverencing the divine revelation, he prepared the ark, became a preacher of righteousness; and taking the warning, which had been given him, for his subject, and shewing his faith by his works, he called upon the inhabitants of the earth on every side, to repent of their sins. Had they duly regarded the warning, all the inhabitants of the earth might have heard it, long before the expiration of the 120 years of God's long suffering: and if a general repentance had taken place, perhaps a respite would have been granted, as there was afterwards,

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18 But with thee will I eſtabliſh my covenant: and thou ſhalt come into the ark; thou, and thy ſons, and thy wife, and thy ſons' wives with thee.

19 And of every living thing of all fleſh, two of every *ſort* ſhalt thou bring into the ark to keep *them* alive with thee: they ſhall be male and female.

20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind: two of every *ſort* ſhall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou ſhalt gather *it* to thee; and it ſhall be for food for thee, and for them.

22 Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, ſo did he.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Lord's command to Noah to enter the ark, and to take of every ſpecies of the animal creation with him, 1—4. 2d. Noah's obedience, 5—9. 3d. The commencement of the flood, 10—11. 4th. It's progreſs, deſtructive prevalence, and continuance, 12—24.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy houſe into the ark; for thee have I ſeen righteous before me in this generation.

2 Of

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in like circumſtances, to Nineveh.—And if individuals had repented, and by faith ſought admiſſion into the ark; doubtleſs it would have been opened to as many as it could contain.—Nay, for any thing that appears to the contrary, if others had prepared arks, they might have been preſerved alſo.

V. 22. *Thus did Noah*, &c.] He believed the warning, and feared; he believed the promiſe, and hoped; and therefore he obeyed the commandment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is ſcarcely a more lamentable proof of a decay of vital godlineſs, or a more effectual means of haſtening it, than intermarriages betwixt profeſſors of true religion and its avowed enemies. There ſeems in all ages to have been a peculiar curſe of God upon them; the evil example of the ungodly party hath generally corrupted, or greatly hurt, the other; family-religion hath been put an end to; and the children almoſt univerſally have been trained up according to the maxims of that parent, which hath been deſtitute of the fear of God. If we profeſs ourſelves to be "the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," (2 *Cor.* vi. 14—18;) we muſt not marry without his conſent: and he will not allow us to prefer beauty, wit, wealth, or honourable alliances, to faith and holineſs.—Though the Lord is ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, yet his Spirit will not always ſtrive with men; and if they perſiſt in ſin in defiance of his word, and the convictions of their own conſciences, he will at length be provoked totally to withdraw from them, and permit them to be hardened to their ruin. If he be ſo grieved by our ſins, as to deſtroy the work of his own hands, how reaſonable is it that we ſhould mourn for it! and that we ſhould ſhew our repentance of it, by purpoſing and ſeeking its deſtruction!—They, whom the world admires and applauds as men of renown, are often, in the judgment of God, and even of common ſenſe, no better than the cruel tyrants, oppreſſors, and firebrands of the earth: let us then deſire that honour which cometh from God, upon thoſe who do good in their generation; not that which comes from man upon thoſe, who do miſchief. But what is become of the image and likeneſs of God? How doth man now merit the divine appellation of VERY GOOD? Alas! the old ſerpent, that proud ambitious liar and murderer, hath filled the earth with his deteſtable progeny! Yet, in the worſt of times, God "hath a remnant according to "the election of grace:" and they, who would pleaſe him, muſt dare to be ſingular. Theſe will believe his truth, and obey his commandments: they will believe his warnings, and fear, but not deſpair; they will believe his promiſes, and hope but not preſume: they will ſtand in awe, and not find fault: they will expect ſafety in his appointed way, upon the warrant of his word; and in this expectation, will not refuſe any obedience, however burdenſome, expenſive, ſelf-denying, or expoſing them to the croſs. But in the warning given to Noah there is one more ſolemn given to us, "to flee from the wrath to come," which, with tremendous efficacy, will ſweep all unbelievers into the pit of deſtruction. Chriſt, (the true Noah, which ſame ſhall comfort us,) hath, at infinite expence, already prepared the ark, and kindly invites us by faith to enter in. Whilſt the day of his patience continues, let us obediently hear his voice, and thankfully ſue for admiſſion, which will then be readily vouchſafed us.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. *Come thou*, &c.] This command was given in the form of an invitation, becauſe of the unmerited advantage to which Noah was thus admitted: and many of the commands of God, as given to ſinners, are put in the ſame form. They are enforced by divine authority, and cannot be neglected, without the moſt atrocious rebellion: but they are alſo invitations to partake of unmerited favours unſpeakably precious, are propoſed by infinite mercy, and cannot be refuſed without the greateſt folly, as well as ingratitude. Noah had not a perſonal righteouſneſs commenſurate with the extenſive demands of the law of God; but he was "an heir of the righteouſneſs which "is by faith." (*Heb.* xi. 7.) That ſame principle which induced him to believe on God's teſtimony, contrary to all human probability, that the deluge would come at the appointed ſeaſon, led him alſo, on the ſame teſtimony, to expect the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, (*Jude.* 14, 15.) This would move him to flee from the wrath to come, as well as prepare the ark: and as he believed, that in the ark *alone*, he could be ſafe in the approach-

2 Of every clean beaſt thou ſhalt take to thee by ſevens, the male and his female: and of beaſts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female.

3 Of fowls alſo of the air by ſevens, the male and the female; to keep ſeed alive upon the face of all the earth.

4 For yet ſeven days, and I will cauſe it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living ſubſtance that I have made, will I deſtroy from off the face of the earth.

5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

6 And Noah *was* ſix hundred years old, when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7 And Noah went in, and his ſons, and his wife, and his ſons' wives with him, into the ark, becauſe of the waters of the flood.

8 Of clean beaſts, and of beaſts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth.

9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And it came to paſs after ſeven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

11 In the ſix hundredth year of Noah's life, in the ſecond month, the ſeventeenth day of the month, the ſame day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 In the ſelf-ſame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the ſons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his ſons with them, into the ark;

14 They, and every beaſt after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every ſort.

15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all fleſh, wherein *is* the breath of life.

16 And

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approaching deluge; ſo he would believe the revelation of a Saviour, and ſeek and expect ſalvation through him alone. Thus he was juſtified by faith: and he would alſo receive that Spirit, "whoſe fruit is in all goodneſs, "and righteouſneſs, and truth;" for "if any man have "not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his:" and by his ſanctifying influences, he would become *righteous* in his character and conduct; that is, devoted to God, and walking before him in all holy obedience, with ſincerity though not perfection.

V. 2, 3.] It is ſuppoſed that the clean beaſts were ſuch as were offered in ſacrifice, and that the ſeventh was added for that uſe; they were alſo ſuch, as were moſt ſerviceable to man. The grant of animal food ſeems not to have been explicitly made before the flood; much leſs had the diſtinction of meats been appointed. There muſt have been a very extraordinary miracle in bringing two of every ſpecies of animals to Noah, and rendering them ſubmiſſive to him, and peaceful with each other: yet it ſeems not to have made any impreſſion on the hardened ſpectators. The ſuſpenſion of the ferocity of the ſavage beaſts, during their continuance in the ark, is generally conſidered as a type of the change, that takes place in the diſpoſition of ſinners, when they enter the true church of Chriſt: but it may alſo remind us of the hypocrite's external good behaviour, though his nature be not changed.

V. 5. *And Noah*, &c.] Implicit faith produced implicit obedience: but unbelief hardened the hearts of the reſt of the world in obſtinate rebellion, and contemptuous defiance.

V. 7. *Sons' wives.*] Though each of Noah's three ſons was then about an hundred years old, and none of them had any children, and the whole earth was about to be deſolated: yet no exception was made to the original conſtitution of marriage, "they *twain* ſhall be one fleſh," (*Gen.* ii. 24. *Matt.* xix. 4—6;) even on this emergency. A deciſive proof that polygamy is diſpleaſing to God; and was only connived at for a ſeaſon, to prevent worſe conſequences from the wickedneſs of man.

V. 10—12.] The long ſuffering of God had waited the appointed time; and, as many think, theſe ſeven days above the 120 years. This was the time of his patience; for "he is ſlow to anger:" but the perſevering impenitence of mankind made way for the days of vengeance; "for he will by no means acquit the wicked."—As a peculiar exertion of Omnipotence effected the deluge, ("behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the "earth";) it is as vain and preſumptuous, to attempt explaining the method of it, on principles of philoſophy, or the agency of ſecond cauſes, as it would be in the ſame manner to ſhew how the dead ſhall ariſe, or with what bodies they ſhall come. By the almighty power of God, both the waters from the ocean, and the waters above the firmament, were brought together to cover the earth: and why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God ſhould drown the world, any more

16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth: and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man.

22 All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.

23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.

24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

CHAP.

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than that he should raise the dead? It continued, therefore, to rain impetuously, incessantly, and without the least intermission, during the space of forty days and forty nights.

V. 16. *Shut him in.*] In what manner this was done, God hath not been pleased to reveal, and it becomes not us to enquire. The Lord thereby gave Noah a pledge of his acceptance, and of his care of him: and by the same token he shut out all the rest, and sealed their condemnation.—But had Noah's preaching no effect? Were there no more believers upon the whole earth? We may probably suppose that many had been previously taken away from the evil to come; for Methuselah died the year before, or in the year of, the flood. But it seems evident that there were no truly godly persons, amongst all the survivors, however some might have been alarmed, affected, or almost persuaded: for there was room enough in the ark; and we do not find that any were refused admittance.—Indeed our Lord hath informed us of the real state of the case, (*Luke* xvii. 27.) "They did eat, "they drank, they married wives, and were given in "marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the "ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Being thus employed, they treated the whole affair with contempt, and encouraged one another in disobedience: and if any were at all disposed to pay regard to it, they either procrastinated, or were afraid of being singular. But what must have been their feelings, when, at the appointed time, it began to rain in so extraordinary a manner, and continued to do so from week to week incessantly; the waters still rising, and following them to the eminences, whither they ascended! How much soever they had before despised Noah's madness, and pitied his weakness; they would now remember his warnings, curse their own folly, admire his wisdom, and envy his happiness.

V. 20—23.] The waters were about eight yards deep, on the top of the highest mountains: so that every project, which any, or all of them, could form for their security, was frustrated: every advantage of situation was unavailing: some might escape longer than others; but, first or last, all, except those in the ark, perished. And with the human species, most of the animals perished also: for the whole creation groans under the effects of man's sins. Indeed the faithful and powerful protection of God was Noah's only security in this wild tumult of the elements: the presence of God his only comfort in this dreary confinement, and in witnessing this dire devastation of the earth and its inhabitants, and especially of the human species, of his companions, his neighbours, his relatives; of those, to whom he had preached, for whom he had prayed, and over whom he had wept, and even of many which had helped to build the ark.—But these were abundantly sufficient to keep him in safety, and to fill him with consolation. "Thou, "Lord, shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is "stayed upon thee, because he trusteth in thee."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How "men despise the riches of the goodness, and "forbearance, and long suffering of God, not knowing "that his goodness *leads* to repentance: but after their "hardness and impenitent heart treasure up wrath against "the day of wrath!" (*Rom.* ii. 4, 5.) until judgment come upon them to the uttermost! But in all this God's purposes are effected, his predictions accomplished, and his justice displayed. Soon will our short span of life come to a close, even though we should linger out our threescore years and ten: the last week, the last day, the last hour, will soon surprise us, if we are not ever watching, and ever ready; and with no less tremendous consternation and terrible destruction, than the deluge did those in the days of Noah. If when the master of the house hath risen up, and shut to the door, we be found without, it will be too late to knock for admittance.—God's threatenings will as certainly be fulfilled as his promises, however now despised and derided: and there is a time coming, when they, who have most affected to pity or deride the godly, will admire and envy them.—What a triumph was here of death, even "over "those, who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's "transgression!" And how the whole creation groaned under man's sin! But though we may indulge the hope that the multitude of infants, who died without their own actual sin through the first Adam's transgression, obtained life without their own actual faith through the

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CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. God remembering Noah, and preparing for his releaſe, 1—3. 2d. The ark reſting on the mountains of Ararat, and the tops of the mountains ſeen, 4, 5. 3d. The method Noah took to gain intelligence, 6—12. 4th. The earth dried, Noah leaving the ark, offering ſacrifices, accepted, and encouraged of God, 13—22.

AND God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to paſs over the earth, and the waters aſſuaged.

2 The fountains alſo of the deep, and the windows of heaven were ſtopped, and the rain from heaven was reſtrained.

3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

4 And the ark reſted in the ſeventh month, on the ſeventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

5 And the waters decreaſed continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the firſt *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains ſeen.

6 And it came to paſs at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.

7 And he ſent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8 Alſo he ſent forth a dove from him, to ſee if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground.

9 But the dove found no reſt for the ſole of her foot, and ſhe returned unto him into the ark: for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

10 And he ſtayed yet other ſeven days, and again he ſent forth the dove out of the ark.

11 And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

12 And

ſecond Adam's obedience: yet how aweful is it to be conſtrained to admit, that the ſame deluge, which ſwept the reſt of that generation from the earth, ſwept their ſouls into the priſon of hell! (1 *Pet.* iii. 19, 20.) How tremendous then will be the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men! and what will be their feelings, who treat the things not ſeen as yet, as if they were unreal, (though revealed by the infallible teſtimony of God,) when they ſhall at length be ſeen, but ſeen too late! Happy they, who are part of Chriſt's family, and ſafe with him in the ark; they may look forward without diſmay, and rejoice in the aſſurance, that they ſhall triumph, when a deluge of fire ſhall encircle the viſible creation. But unleſs we dare to be ſingular, and renounce the favour, and venture the ſcorn and hatred, of the world; unleſs we be willing to ſubmit to ſelf-denial and diligence; we can find no admiſſion into this ark. And even in the ark, whilſt in this world, we ſhall need faith and patience, and have much to exerciſe them.—Though we ſhould lament, we need not wonder at the prevalence of impiety; nor need faithful miniſters deſpond, if their ſucceſs be not ſo large as their expectations.—Ungodly children often receive temporal mercies for their parents' ſake: but unleſs they themſelves are made partakers of faith and holineſs, they will not eſcape eternal deſtruction.—Finally, there is much difference of character among men, and we are apt to imagine ſome favourable diſtinctions in our own caſe: but if we *neglect*, *refuſe*, or *abuſe* the ſalvation of Chriſt; we ſhall, notwithſtanding ſuch imaginary advantages, be overwhelmed in the common deſtruction of an unbelieving world.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.[V. 1—3.] The Lord ſeemed to have forgotten to be gracious; and perhaps Noah was tempted to think he ſhould be impriſoned in the ark for life, as the flood continued ſo long after it had done its work: but at length God remembered him; that is, he manifeſted his regard to him, and care of him, by providing not only for his ſafety, but for his enlargement: he noticed the animals alſo; for nothing is beneath his condeſcending care and kindneſs. By means of a dry wind, the clouds were diſperſed; and things returned to their old courſe, according to the operation of ſecond cauſes: the miraculous interpoſition being removed.

V. 4, 5.] On the ſeventeenth day of the ſeventh month of the year, (as it is moſt probable,) juſt five months, or 150 days, from the beginning of the flood, the waters were ſo far abated, that the ark reſted on Mount Ararat, ſuppoſed to be in Armenia: but it was nearly three months longer, before the tops of the mountains were ſeen.

V. 6—14.] Forty days after the tops of the mountains became viſible, Noah ſent out a raven, in order to know the ſtate of the earth: but as it was uſed to feed on fleſh, it returned no more into the ark. After ſeven days, therefore, he ſent forth a dove, which, being uſed to another kind of living, returned to him; and on a ſecond trial, brought an olive-branch in her mouth.

This

12 And he ſtayed yet other ſeven days, and ſent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

13 And it came to paſs in the ſix hundredth and firſt year, in the firſt *month*, the firſt *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

14 And in the ſecond month, on the ſeven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

15 And God ſpake unto Noah, ſaying,

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy ſons, and thy ſons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all fleſh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his ſons, and his wife, and his ſons' wives with him:

19 Every beaſt, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatſoever creepeth upon the earth after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and took of every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the LORD ſmelled a ſweet ſavour; and the LORD ſaid in his heart, I will not again curſe the ground any more for man's ſake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth: neither will I again ſmite any more every living thing, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, ſeed-time and harveſt, and cold and heat, and ſummer and winter, and day and night, ſhall not ceaſe.

CHAP.

This was a token that the fruitful plains were dried, and the vegetables preſerved: and on the third trial, the dove returned no more. Theſe ſixty-one days, or two months, reach exactly to the firſt day of the next year, which was the ſix hundredth and firſt of Noah's life: and in leſs than two months the earth was again fit to be inhabited. The repeated mention of ſeven days ſeems an intimation of the obſervance of the ſabbath in the ark; after the ordinances of which, the dove was ſent out. Theſe two birds may be conſidered as an inſtructive emblem. The raven repreſents the hypocrite; who, though profeſſedly one of God's people, yet retaining his reliſh for worldly things, in time of temptation returns to them, and is ſatisfied with them. The dove, (the external ſymbol of that Spirit, who deſcended on Chriſt, and dwells in his people,) is emblematical of the true chriſtian; who, being ſpiritually-minded, though through temptation he may, as it were, quit the ark, and get into the world; yet he finds no reſt, until he return to Chriſt, and be received by him.—The olive-branch, probably from ſome obſcure tradition of this event, has generally been the emblem of peace. Thus alſo the heavenly Dove, by his holy conſolations, brings to the broken-hearted believer the olive-branch of peace and reconciliation with God.

V. 16. *Go forth*, &c.] Though Noah had been making obſervations on the ſtate of the earth, and preparations for leaving the ark; yet he waited God's command, before he actually quitted it.

V. 19. *Every beaſt*, &c.] It ſeems that, by a peculiar providential interpoſition, no animal of any ſort had died, though they had been ſhut up above a year.

V. 20—22.] Noah, in faith, aſcribed his deliverance to the mercy of God, through the promiſed Saviour; and not to his own righteouſneſs: thus he rendered his tribute of gratitude, and devoted himſelf and family to God; and ſought his further protection and bleſſing amidſt the deſolations, with which he was ſurrounded.—The ſmell of burning fleſh could no more pleaſe God, than the blood of bulls and goats; except as typical of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and expreſſive of Noah's humble obedient faith and love. (*Eph.* v. 2.) Some would have thought it a very great waſte to deſtroy ſo many uſeful animals, when there was ſuch a ſcarcity; but that is never waſted, which is expended in God's ſervice, and according to his appointment. The Lord therefore graciouſly accepted his oblation, and promiſed that he would no more curſe the earth; that is, after the manner of the flood: for the original curſe was not removed, nor is it clear that it was mitigated. He added, "*for* the "imagination of man's heart," &c, or *though* it be ſo. Other methods of repreſſing wickedneſs would be employed, but this ſhould not be repeated: The flood waſhed away that generation of wicked men, but it removed not depravity from man's nature; who being conceived and born in ſin, thinks, contrives, deviſes, and loves wickedneſs, even from his youth; and that as much ſince the flood as before.

V. 22. *While the earth*, &c.] *Partial* failures of ſeed-time and harveſt are not inconſiſtent with his gracious aſſurance: according to which the heavenly bodies have ever ſince preſerved their courſe, the ſeaſons their ſucceſſions, and the earth hath produced its increaſe for the uſe of man, notwithſtanding his ingratitude: and on this word we depend, that thus it ſhall be till the myſtery of God be finiſhed.

PRAC-

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1st. The Lord blessing Noah and his family; granting them the use of flesh for food; prohibiting them to eat the blood; and requiring murderers to be punished with death, 1—7. *2d. God's covenant with Noah and his posterity, of which the rainbow was constituted a pledge,* 8—17. *3d. Noah's family and employment,* 18—20. *4th. His drunkenness, and the behaviour of his sons; with his prophecy, age, and death,* 21—29.

AND God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.

2 And the fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4 But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall you not eat.

5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6 Whoso-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord not only knoweth how to reserve the wicked unto the day of judgment to be punished, however numerous, powerful, and haughty; but also to deliver the godly out of temptations in the best time and manner, however few, despised, and helpless they may be. Though for a time he *seemeth* to forget his afflicted children, and in unbelief they are prone to judge according to that appearance; yet in due time he will make his kind and careful remembrance of them manifestly to appear.—The devoted servant of God will not only make haste to keep his commandments; but he will patiently wait his time for deliverance, and for promised blessings. God's faithfulness is the best security; and that security is given to all them that trust in him: seeing his glory is engaged for their salvation, as much as for Noah's preservation.—They who are saved from destruction, must yet on earth witness the desolations, which sin makes, with aching hearts, and weeping eyes; and in many things share in them. But the consolations of God will counterbalance these sorrows; and in heaven all tears shall be wiped away: so that even the destruction of the wicked will cause no interruption, or abatement of their perfect felicity: but the mercy of God, the sacrifice of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, are the real causes of the difference betwixt those who are saved, and those who perish. The first use, which we should make of deliverances from trouble, should be to return thanks to God for his mercy, solemnly to devote ourselves to him and his service, and to seek anew his providential protection, and gracious blessing. Finally, the divine authority of the Scripture (as well as the faithfulness of God) is demonstrated in the regular course of the seasons of the year. May we therefore admire his goodness, trust his providence, receive all from his love, and use all to his glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 2. *Fear of you, &c.*] It is probable that the subjection of the animals, before the fall, was voluntary, and sprang from love of man, who was then by instinct regarded as a friend: but since that event, it hath been more the result of fear; most of them regarding him as a very potent enemy, whom they are naturally disposed to dread, submit to, or flee from. We witness the fulfilment of this promise on every side, and amongst creatures of all sorts. The ease, with which horses are managed, notwithstanding their strength and spirit, and the severity with which they are treated; the safety with which large droves of oxen are goaded forward, frequently by a single youth, who conscious of his superiority fears not them, whilst they stand in awe of him, would be deemed very wonderful, were they not so common: but they are seldom considered as the effects of God's power, and proofs of his truth and goodness. Even the most savage of the wild beasts have been, and are tamed of man, and have an instinctive dread of him, shunning populous places, and retreating into forests and deserts; lying still all the day whilst man is abroad, and roaming forth when he is retired to rest; and seldom injuring him, unless pinched by hunger, or provoked by opposition. Were this instinctive fear removed, and should the animals conscious of their force rise in general rebellion, what confusion and devastation must ensue!

V. 3, 4.] We cannot know, whether men had, before the flood, taken the liberty of eating the flesh of animals, or no: but it seems not to have been given them in an explicit manner. This grant fully warrants our use of them for food, but not the abuse of them by intemperance, still less by cruelty: we ought not to give them needless pain, either whilst they live, or in putting them to death. The allowance is not limited to any kind of animals: so that the distinction of clean and unclean must relate to their use in sacrifice: and the principal reason of the prohibition of blood seems to have been of the same nature; because blood typified the great Atonement: yet it might here also be intended as a check to cruelty; lest men inured to shed and feed upon the blood of animals, should grow unfeeling, and be less shocked at the idea of shedding human blood. The eating of raw flesh, and the use of blood, have also been generally deemed unwholesome.

V. 5, 6.] From this energetic declaration it certainly

6 Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed: for in the image of God made he man.

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

8 And God ſpake unto Noah, and to his ſons with him, ſaying,

9 And I, behold I eſtabliſh my covenant with you, and with your ſeed after you;

10 And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beaſt of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beaſt of the earth.

11 And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with you; neither ſhall all fleſh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither ſhall there any more be a flood to deſtroy the earth.

12 And God ſaid, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do ſet my bow in the cloud, and it ſhall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it ſhall come to paſs, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow ſhall be ſeen in the cloud:

15 And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you, and every living creature of all fleſh; and the waters ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy all fleſh.

16 And the bow ſhall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlaſting covenant between God and every living creature of all fleſh that *is* upon the earth.

17 And God ſaid unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have eſtabliſhed between me and all fleſh that *is* upon the earth.

18 And the ſons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan.

19 Theſe *are* the three ſons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overſpread.

20 And Noah began *to be* an huſbandman, and he planted a vineyard.

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent.

22 And Ham the father of Canaan ſaw the nakedneſs of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their ſhoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedneſs of

follows, that wilful murder ought invariably in all communities to be puniſhed with death; whatever form it aſſumes, or however it may, by ſpecious but deluſive pretences, be extenuated: and that God will himſelf require it of thoſe, who ſuffer the murderer to eſcape: ſo that the puniſhment due to murder will in ſome way be inflicted on them, as acceſſaries to the crime. And to impreſs the greater horror of it, even the beaſt that ſlew a man, was to be put to death.—It is a ſubject for ſerious enquiry to all, who are cordially affected to the welfare of theſe nations, how far it can be juſtified before God; how far national guilt may, or may not be contracted; when ſo many are ſuffered to elude juſtice, who commit wilful deliberate murder in duels: whilſt ſuch numbers of thieves are put to death, which God never commanded, perhaps does not approve?—Though the moral image of God in which man was at firſt created be defaced; yet the natural image remains: and it is the moſt daring act of rebellion againſt God to aſſault his viſible image on earth, and deſtroy the life which he communicated. It is obſervable that the reaſon, given for the puniſhment of the murderer with death, is taken from the affront which he offers to God; not from the injury which he does to man.

V. 9—17.] This word rendered *covenant* ſometimes means a reciprocal agreement betwixt two or more parties; at other times a poſitive engagement on one ſide, without any reſtipulation on the other. That eſtabliſhed with Noah was of the latter ſort: to obviate man's fears, the Lord engaged that he would drown the earth no more, notwithſtanding man's wickedneſs; and we have a continued proof of his faithfulneſs to this engagement. Probably the rainbow had appeared before the flood, being the effect of natural cauſes: but it was now appointed to a new uſe, and made a ſeal and pledge of that particular engagement, that God would not any more deluge the whole earth. This was confirmed by *an everlaſting covenant*, or one which ſhall never be aboliſhed. (*Iſaiah*, liv. 9, 10.)

V. 19. *Of them*, &c.] This preludes the conjecture, that Noah himſelf had other children after the flood.

V. 20—23.] After the flood Noah began again to cultivate the earth. It has been thought that wine was now firſt

of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

28 And

first made of grapes; and that Noah, not aware of its effects, was surprised into drunkenness: but this is improbable. Rather it is recorded by the inspired historian, with that perfect impartiality which is peculiar to the Scripture, as an instance and evidence of human frailty and imperfection; and to shew that the best of men cannot stand upright, without they are kept dependent upon, and upheld by, divine grace; nor stand in judgment before him, without an interest in his pardoning mercy, by faith in the great Redeemer.—Ham seems to have been a man of bad character; and probably he rejoiced to find his father in so unbecoming a situation; that, by exposing him, he might retaliate upon him for the reproofs which he had received from him, in the exercise of his parental authority: and perhaps Canaan first discovered Noah's situation, and told it to Ham. This must have happened several years after the flood; for there were but eight persons in the ark, and consequently Ham had no children at that time.—The conduct of Ham, in exposing his father to his brethren; and their behaviour, in turning away from the sight of his disgrace, formed a perfect contrast to each other.

V. 25. *Cursed*, &c.] Some would render these words, "Cursed be Ham the father of Canaan;" and however that may be determined, two things are evident: 1st, That Ham's posterity by Canaan were *peculiarly* intended in this curse: and not only have they been *almost* entirely excluded from the church of God in all ages; but they were *almost* totally extirpated by the descendents of Abraham, when they took possession of the land of Canaan, and in their subsequent wars. And perhaps Moses, under the direction of God, thus recorded this prophecy for the encouragement of the Israelites, when they were about to enter upon those wars: 2d. That the other descendents of Ham were also included in some measure. It would take me too far to enter upon a particular discussion of this comprehensive prophecy: the reader may see a concise, but satisfactory, explication of it in Bishop Newton's Dissertations, 1st. Vol. Dissertation the First,—from which I will insert a short extract—'The whole continent of 'Africa was peopled principally by the descendents of 'Ham: and for how many ages have the better parts of 'that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, and 'then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks! In what 'wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live 'most of the inhabitants: And of the poor negroes, how 'many hundreds every year are sold and bought, like 'beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter of 'the world to do the work of beasts in another!"—However, this in no measure vindicates the covetous and barbarous oppression of those, who thus enrich themselve with the products of their sweat and blood.—God has not commanded us to enslave negroes, as he did Israel to extirpate the Canaanites: and therefore, without doubt, he will severely punish such cruel injustice.

V. 26. *Blessed be*, &c.] This may be rendered, "Blessed "be Shem of the Lord God." Accordingly the descendents of Shem, in the line of Abraham, extirpated or enslaved the seven nations of Canaan; and almost entirely, and alone enjoyed the blessings of true religion, until the coming of Christ, who was descended from him. And from the other branches of his family, in the eastern parts of Asia, many flourishing kingdoms have descended; to their lot most fruitful countries have fallen; and they have enjoyed a far greater degree of civilization and its blessings, than the descendents of Ham.

V. 27. *God shall enlarge*, &c.] As the endeavours of learned men, to shew from the following chapter which of the nations descended from each of Noah's sons, are chiefly useful, in evincing the exact accomplishment of this extraordinary prophecy; so I shall here subjoin a few intimations from the most obvious result of their researches. Japhet seems to have been the progenitor of the greater half of the human race. The descendents of Gomer, his eldest son, probably settled in the northern parts of Asia Minor, and thence spread into the Cimmerian Bosphorus, and the adjacent regions; and from them the numerous tribes of the Gauls, Germans, Celts, and Cimbrians, are supposed to have sprung. The Scythians, Tartars, and other northern barbarous nations, seem to have been the posterity of Magog: the Medes, of Madai; the Ionians, and other Greeks, of Javan; and the Thracians, of Tirus. So that nearly all the nations of Europe are thought to have descended from Japhet; and probably America was peopled by his posterity, as well as a considerable part of Asia.—Moreover the principal success of the Gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles, have hitherto been amongst his descendents. Thus hath God enlarged Japhet; and he hath not only been *persuaded*, (as some render the word,) to dwell in the tents of Shem, by obtaining admission into the Church; but also, by succeeding to that authority and prosperity, under the Grecian and Roman Empires, and in subsequent ages, which were for a time vested chiefly in the posterity of Shem (x. 2.) From Chush the son of Ham, the Ethiopians in Africa, and several tribes in Asia, (inhabiting part of the country now called Arabia,) were descended. Mizraim was the ancestor of the Egyptians, Cyrenians,

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

CHAP.

ans, Libyans, &c: Phut, of the Mauritanians, &c: in ſhort, all Africa was peopled by his poſterity. The devoted nations, whom God deſtroyed by Iſrael, were deſcended from Canaan; as were the Phenicians and Carthaginians, who were ſubjugated with terrible deſtruction by the Greeks and Romans.—True religion has hitherto flouriſhed very little among Ham's deſcendents; they are in general at this day almoſt entire ſtrangers to Chriſtianity; their ſituation in almoſt every age hath remarkably correſponded to this prediction; and at this preſent time perhaps more ſo than at any preceding period: though there be ground to hope that a favourable change will ſhortly commence (x. 6. 20.)—The poſterity of Shem, in the line of Arphaxad, Eber, and Peleg, compriſed all the deſcendents of Abraham, and the viſible church under the old diſpenſation. The Perſians ſprang from Elam; the Aſſyrians and Chaldeans, from Aſhur; and the Syrians, Meſopotamians, and Armenians, from Aram: and the inhabitants of China, the Eaſt Indies, and all the eaſtern part of Aſia, ſeem to be the poſterity of Joktan the ſon of Heber (x. 21. 29.)—A very general knowledge of hiſtory will ſuffice to ſatisfy the ſerious enquirer, that the deſcendents of Canaan have been enſlaved by and ſubjected to thoſe of Shem and Japhet, through many generations: but eſpecially we ſhould obſerve that the Lord Jeſus was deſcended from Shem; to whom all nations muſt do willing ſervice, or elſe be deſtroyed as his enemies.—The extraordinary accompliſhment of this prediction, which contains almoſt a prophetic hiſtory of the world, vindicates Noah from the ſuſpicion of having uttered it, from any perſonal reſentment: and though the matter of fact demonſtrates that children actually do ſuffer for their parent's crimes, and this ſentence would be a ſenſible mortification to Ham and Canaan; yet we ſhould principally obſerve that the Spirit of God took occaſion from thence to reveal his ſecret purpoſes, for a very important benefit to poſterity even to this day.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The bleſſing of God is the real cauſe of proſperity, perſonal, relative, and national; on him our dependence ſhould be placed, and to him our gratitude for it is due. With what thankfulneſs ſhould we receive that immenſe advantage, eaſe, and pleaſure, which reſult from the labour of the domeſtic animals, and which the fleſh of ſo many creatures affords us; and the ſecurity we enjoy from the aſſaults of the noxious and ferocious, through the fear and dread of man, which God hath impreſſed upon them!—But though we are maſters, God will call us to an aweful account, if we act as tyrants; and avenge the cauſe of his oppreſſed creatures upon their oppreſſors. How much more ſhould we dread murder, and all thoſe paſſions, which produce that enormous crime! Though the murderer may eſcape, bribe, or outbrave human juſtice; yet, except he repent, he ſhall never eſcape the vengeance of God.—The Lord takes care to obviate the fears and anxieties of his people; and we ſhould copy the example of his kindneſs. But what is man in his beſt eſtate?—Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall: and let not him, who has triumphed over great temptations, be ſecure even in ſuch as are leſs; for they, who have behaved well in the worſt of company, and amidſt the worſt examples, are not ſafe even in ſolitude. Let us then watch and pray, and not be high-minded, but fear—And remember that drunkenneſs is a ſin eſpecially to be ſhunned, as it both ſo expoſes to ſhame, and is an occaſion of further wickedneſs in ourſelves and others.—But though the righteous fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down: nor is a ſingle act of ſin inadvertently committed, to be looked upon in the ſame light as allowed and habitual tranſgreſſion: the former may be the blemiſh of a ſaint, the latter is the brand of the hypocrite. And in honouring parents, magiſtrates, ſeniors, and other honourable characters, we ought to imitate the example of Shem and Japhet; not only reſpecting their wiſdom and goodneſs, but covering their incidental blemiſhes and failures: for a peculiar bleſſing belongs to thoſe, who act in this manner; but an aweful curſe awaits thoſe, who copy the pattern of Ham, in their conduct towards thoſe whom God hath commanded them to honour.—But let us not neglect to obſerve, how theſe prophecies, ſo evidently fulfilling in all nations and ages, evidence the divine original of the Bible. We ſhould continually keep this concluſion in mind, as we proceed in our examination of the ſacred Oracles: that, perceiving how authenticated facts, and even ſuch as fall under our own obſervation, or paſs in our experience, combine in proving unanſwerably the divine original of the ſcriptures; we may the more readily ſubmit our underſtanding, in implicit faith, to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and our will in implicit obedience to the authority of God. Thus we ſhall learn our guilt and danger; and fleeing from the wrath which is coming on the impenitent and unbelieving, we ſhall embrace the invitations of the Goſpel, accept of its precious ſalvation, rely on the ſecurity of the new Covenant, and patiently wait for the bleſſings which will aſſuredly be conferred on all believers. Being thus admitted into the true ark, we ſhall be ſafe in thoſe waſting calamities, which ſweep others into deſtruction: and though what we witneſs or experience may give us great pain, and we may even give lamentable proof of our weakneſs and depravity, yet we ſhall be carried through all trials and temptations; we ſhall overcome all our enemies; we ſhall be made inſtruments of good to others; and we ſhall at length find that all the promiſes of the ſcripture have been fulfilled to us, and all our prayers that were grounded on them have been completely anſwered: "O Lord God of hoſts, bleſſed "is the man, that putteth his truſt in thee!"—

NOTES.

CHAP. X.

Contains an account, 1st Of Noah's family in general, and of the posterity of Japheth, 1—5. 2d, Of the posterity of Ham, and of Nimrod in particular, 6—14. 3d, Of the descendants of Ham by Canaan, 15—20. 4th, Of the posterity of Shem, 21—32. (Note, ix. 26.)

NOW these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha; and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 Out of that land went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city.

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

15 And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

16 And the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgashite,

17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

20 These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

21 Unto Shem also the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were *children* born.

22 The children of Shem; Elam, and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

24 And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.

25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg, for in his days was

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NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 8—12.] Probably Nimrod was at first eminent as an hunter, much was needful so much as a virtue, as a useful method of preventing the hurtful increase of wild beasts: that employment would require great courage and address, and expose a man to much danger and hardship; and thus afford a field for ambition to aspire after pre-eminence, and gradually attract a number of valiant men to one leader. Probably from such beginning Nimrod began to claim authority, and assume subjection; and thence he took occasion to wage wars to extend his conquests, and enlarge his acquisitions, by bulls

by violence and blood. Thus in a daring manner casting off the fear of God, and acting in defiance of his late prohibition of shedding human blood, he rendered himself notorious, and his name became a proverb. When he had erected a kingdom at Babel, "he went forth out of that land to Ashur, and builded Nineveh." So it might be rendered: and perhaps this is the true meaning; though some learned men contend for that contained in our version.

V. 21. *Of Eber.*] Of all the Hebrews, and many other nations, who were the descendants of Shem by this branch.

V. 25. *In his days, &c.*] Peleg signifies *division*; and God saw the division taken place at the time of his birth,

that

was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

29 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these *were* the sons of Joktan.

30 And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east.

31 These *are* the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

32 These *are* the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The project formed of building a city and tower, 1—4. 2d. The counsel and judgment of God to disappoint this project, by confounding the language of the builders, 5—7. 3d. Their consequent confusion and dispersion, 8—9. 4th. Shem's descendents in lineal succession to Abram, 10—27. 5th. Some account of Abram and his family, and of his removal from his native country, 28—32.

AND the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And

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that name might as properly have been given to any of his cotemporaries. (*Note*, xi. 4.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Under the blessing of God small beginnings may, in process of time, proceed to a vast increase.—As all mankind are of one family, and nearly related in Adam and Noah, how reasonable is it that we should love and do good to each other! Whenever I behold a human being, whatever be his language and garb, or wherever he was born, I should recognize a near relation, and behave to him accordingly. In this view how unnatural and absurd is that prejudice against foreigners, and that contempt of them, which generally prevail! And how can it consist with love to our neighbours, our brethren, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, to treat them with rigour, or hold them in unwilling slavery? But whence then come wars and fightings amongst us? From that first murderer, who so early stirred up in fallen man the vile lusts of pride, ambition, covetousness, revenge, and cruelty, and thus armed brethren against each other in horrid war; and who hath in all ages filled the earth with slaughter and devastation,—which one might previously have supposed could gratify none but himself. But the very existence of war, and the necessity of always being ready for it, and of sometimes waging it, too plainly prove *man's depravity*, as well as *Satan's influence*. Blessed be God, the days are coming, when all the nations shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more: and then conquerors will no longer be adjudged, as in man's partial histories, illustrious characters; but branded with infamy, as in the impartial records of the Bible.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 3. *Go to, let us*, &c.] These builders consulted and combined together; and they excited and animated each other in this daring attempt, and in encountering the difficulties which they met with. The plain they had chosen contained no quarries of stone, but yielded quantities of bitumen, which formed a natural cement; and having thus obtained mortar, their ingenuity and resolution suggested a method of removing the other hindrance, by burning clay into bricks.

V. 4. *A city*, &c.] "The beginning of Nimrod's "kingdom was Babel;" (x. 10.) we have therefore reason to conclude that he was at the head of this rebellious enterprise, though his name be not mentioned. The parties concerned intended to erect both a city to dwell in, and an exceedingly high tower, beyond any thing which had yet been seen. If they had planned this enormous building to secure themselves against a future deluge, in forgetfulness or disbelief of the promise of God; or in defiance of his vengeance, they would probably have chosen some high mountain for the purpose: but they proposed to themselves the acquisition of renown; they wanted to do somewhat in order to be admired and talked of; they sought their own glory, and not the glory of God.—It is, however, remarkable that though this enterprise was undertaken purposely to make themselves a name, yet no history records so much as the name of one of these Babel-builders, except that obscure intimation respecting Nimrod before alluded

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

10 These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood.

11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah.

13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber.

15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg.

17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu.

19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug.

21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor.

23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah.

25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

26 And

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alluded to. It was God's purpose that they should be dispersed, form many nations under separate governments, people all lands, and replenish the earth, as his blessing upon Noah intimated (ix. 1). Accordingly some regular division of the earth, among the descendents of Noah's three sons, seems to have taken place about the time of the birth of Peleg, that is about an hundred years after the deluge; probably under the direction of Noah and his sons, and perhaps by divine appointment (x. 25). But in contempt of the blessing of God, and in opposition to his counsels, the bulk of mankind, some years afterwards, united together to build a city and tower as a bond of union to prevent their divisions, and probably their chieftains, at first, intended it to be the metropolis of that universal dominion of which they seem to have been ambitious. Whether they immediately intended the tower for an idolatrous temple also, is not certain; but idolatry was early introduced, and also speedily became one of its chief residences.

V. 5. *The Lord, &c.*] The Lord took particular no-

tice of the enterprise; and men who do this, come to the soot to examine for themselves.—The distinction between the *children of men*, or the openly profane, and *the children of God*, or professors of true religion, still subsisted. From this expression we may infer that Noah, Shem, Eber, and other pious persons, had no concern in this ambitious rebellious project.

V. 6—9.] Ever since Adam broke through the fence of the divine prohibition, by eating the forbidden fruit, men will not be restrained from any thing they set their hearts upon, unless by a strong hand. The Lord employed the language of *counsel* and *determination*, in contempt of, and opposition to, that of these builders. The *difference of languages* subsisting all over the earth from the most remote ages corroborates this fact, and establishes our translation of the passage against those who put another construction on it. Almighty power was employed to effect it; nothing could be devised more fatal to break the wicked combination, and confound the counsels of the rebellious company; and though it was a severe rebuke, and of a woful consequences,

in

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. The calling of Abram, and his obedience, 5. 2d. The Lord's appearance to him in Canaan, and Abram's worship, 6—9. 3d. Abram's going down to Egypt, and denying his wife, 10—13. 4th. Sarai's danger and deliverance, 14—17. Abram rebuked and safely dismissed by Pharaoh, 18—20.

NOW the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

2 And

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in still more entirely excluding them from communion with the visible church, and separating them from it: yet considering their daring crimes, it was not only justice, but mercy. Babel signifies *confusion*.—This city was afterwards called Babylon, the head quarters for ages of idolatry, and the type of the New Testament mystical Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, which likewise is and will be *confusion*.

V. 27. *Terah begat Abram*, &c.] Though Abram be first mentioned, he seems to have been Terah's youngest son, and not born till his father was an hundred and thirty years of age.—For Terah lived two hundred and five years, and Abram, who did not leave Haran till after his death, was only seventy-five when he departed thence. There are other ways indeed of solving this difficulty, but this seems the most probable.—We find, by computation, that the original revelation made to Adam might be conveyed down to Abram at two thousand years distance, through only three intermediate hands.—Enos, the son of Adam, lived till Noah was seventy-four years old;—Shem the son of Noah, lived almost as long as Abram.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How soon do men forget the most tremendous judgments, and return to their former crimes! The increase of wickedness kept pace with that of the human species, though the desolations of the deluge were before their eyes, though they sprang from the stock of righteous Noah, and though that patriarch was still living. So ineffectual is every thing, except the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, to remove the obliquity of the human will, and the depravity of the human heart!—Arduous undertakings must only be accomplished by counsel, harmony, and mutual encouragement; which we often find in the enterprises of darkening sinners against the counsel and counsel of God, and which are too often wanting in the endeavours of God's servants to promote his glory. Doubtless an enemy hath done this. There is, however, no counsel, nor wisdom against the Lord.—Whilst men on earth are plotting to defeat his purposes, "he sitteth in heaven, and laugheth them to scorn; "yea, the Lord will have them in derision."—The efforts of sinners to honour themselves will all at last issue in shame and confusion.—In the difficulty with which our intercourse with foreign nations is carried on, and in the labour with which learning is acquired, we experience the effects of this transaction. Nay, before the coming of Christ, and in these latter ages, one great impediment to the spreading of true religion hath originated from it. Yet "righteous "art thou in all thy judgments, O Lord!" when it was thy sovereign purpose to spread the Gospel among the nations which thou hast dispersed, how easily didst thou by the gift of tongues remove this impediment.—Oh! remove all other impediments, and fill the earth with truth and righteousness.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—3. It is intimated in the foregoing chapter, that some time before this the Lord had made himself known to Abram; in consequence of which he had set out with Terah his father, and travelled from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, where he was stopped, probably by the infirmities of his aged parent, and where he continued till after Terah's death. It is plainly intimated by Joshua, that the whole family had served other gods before the call of Abram; (*Note, Josh.* xxiv. 2.) from which we may form a judgment how very much and generally idolatry prevailed in the world. To prevent its universal prevalence, and to secure a people to himself, among whom his true worship

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing,

3 And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee: and in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed.

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had ſpoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* ſeventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's ſon, and all their ſubſtance that they had gathered, and the ſouls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram paſſed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and ſaid, Unto thy ſeed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8 And

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worſhip might be maintained, to whom his oracles might be delivered, and with whom his ordinances might be eſtabliſhed, till the coming of Chriſt; the Lord, in his wiſe ſovereignty, made choice of Abram, and ſingled him out from among his aſſociates in idolatry, whilſt he ſuffered other nations to walk in their own ways: and this was evidently *grace*, and not the reward of his merit. In conſequence of this choice, "the God of glory appeared to him," (*Acts* vii. 2.) probably by ſome viſible manifeſtation, as frequently afterwards; and having made himſelf known unto him, and ſatisfied him that he was the true God, and that this was a divine revelation, he commanded him to leave his native country. Idolatry might be more prevalent there than in Canaan; or it might be eaſier for him to keep clear of it among ſtrangers, than among his former aſſociates. Abram, who was choſen to be "the "father of the faithful," and the exemplar of believers in all future ages, as well as the repoſitory of the promiſes, repreſented in his call and conduct that ſeparation from the world and ſin, with which the walk with God and the life of faith commence. He was therefore likewiſe required to leave all his kindred that would not accompany him in his pilgrimage. To engage his prompt obedience, the Lord promiſed to bleſs him perſonally, in things temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal,—and relatively in his poſterity; and to make his name great and honourable, which hath been ſurpriſingly accompliſhed. Throughout the viſible church Abram's name has ever been held in the higheſt veneration: and many nations in the eaſt exceedingly revere his memory, and glory in their real or pretended relation to him. Perhaps no mere man, who ever lived, has been ſo widely and ſo durably held in honour. It was alſo promiſed that he ſhould be *a bleſſing*: to the lateſt ages important bleſſings would, for his ſake, be vouchſafed to his poſterity, and his example would be eminently uſeful till the end of time. The Lord would have the ſame friends and enemies with his beloved ſervant: *in him*, or in One deſcended from him, all bleſſings centre, and through and from him they have been communicated to millions, and ſhall continue to be ſo till all nations ſhall be made happy in him, and by faith in Jeſus become Abram's ſeed and heirs according to the promiſe. (Notes, &c. *Gal.* iii., *Rom.* iv.)

V. 4, 5.] "By faith Abram obeyed, and he went out "not knowing whither he went" (*Heb.* xi. 8). He was fully ſatisfied that the call, promiſe, and command were from the true God. He believed that his teſtimony was true, and his promiſe faithful, and that he was able to fulfil it. He was aſſured that the bleſſing of the Almighty was ſufficient to compenſate for all that he could loſe or leave behind, to countervail all trials, to ſupply all his wants, and to anſwer and exceed all his deſires and expectations; and he was alſo convinced that nothing but miſery would enſue upon diſobedience. This was the faith which produced obedience; though natural reluctance might be ſtrong, and numbers would ſcorn and deride him as a viſionary and a madman, to leave all behind him, without ſo much as being able to inform his curious neighbours, or expoſtulating relatives, whither he was going. By this faith he was juſtified, as it intereſted him in the merits and atonement of the promiſed Seed; and the conſequent obedience proved his faith genuine, and his profeſſion ſincere. Lot alſo went with him, being, through his inſtrumentality, made partaker of the ſame faith. Their ſervants, who were their property, alſo accompanied them. And they neither loitered, turned back, nor ſtopped ſhort, as many do who *ſeem to* ſet out well; nor met with any *inſurmountable* obſtacle which none do who *indeed* ſet out well.

V. 6, 7.] The expreſſion "The Canaanite was then "in the land," ſeems to have been added by Ezra, or ſome perſon in after times.—The Lord appeared to Abram on his arrival in Canaan, to teſtify his acceptance of his faith and obedience, and to encourage him; at the ſame time that he welcomed him to the promiſed land, which he aſſured him ſhould be the poſſeſſion of his poſterity; though he then had no child, though the Canaanites dwelt in it, and though he could only ſojourn there as a ſtranger upon ſufferance. Accordingly Abram "builded an altar," unto JEHOVAH who *appeared to him*. He not only communed with God in ſecret, but made an open profeſſion of his religion; maintained the public worſhip of Jehovah; avowed his faith in, and expectations from, the promiſed Seed, in prefiguration of whoſe atonement theſe ſacrifices were inſtituted; and probably, both with his family, and ſuch of his neighbours as were induced to join him, he obſerved the ſabbaths with ſacred ſolemnity.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

14 And it came to pass that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she *was* very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.

17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She *is* my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

CHAP.

V. 8. *Beth-el.*] Many of these names were given long afterwards; but Moses spake of the several places as they were known in his time. "*Calling on the name of the Lord*," may signify the public worship which accompanied Abram's sacrifices. Some render it, "he *preached concerning* the "name of the Lord;" as intimating that he joined public instructions to his devotions.

V. 10. *Went down*, &c.] Abram did not in this emergency return back, as weary of his pilgrimage, or as despising the promised land; but he retired for a season into Egypt.

V. 11.—13.] Here we see much to blame in Abram, and much to admire in the impartiality of the inspired historian. Abram's counsel to Sarai was the result of unbelief. God had promised him a numerous offspring: and would he suffer him to be destroyed whilst childless? He had passed his word that he would bless him; and would he immediately desert him?—From this distrust sprang a base prevarication, and persuasion of Sarai to unite in the sin, which exposed her chastity to imminent peril; and temptations were thrown in the ways of others; so that the whole was suited to prejudice men against true religion. How inconsistent were these things with the character of the *friend of God!*

V. 17. *Plagued*, &c.] God was pleased to inflict on Pharaoh and his family some disorder, which both prevented Sarai's defilement, and made him sensible for what cause they were plagued.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The walk of faith begins when God graciously makes himself known unto a sinner by his word and Spirit. Thus he calls him to forsake his sinful and worldly pursuits and connections, to deny himself, and to become his spiritual worshipper and devoted servant: while allured by exceedingly great and precious promises, drawn by strong desires and expectations, and convinced of the ruin which attends disobedience, the sinner through grace obeys the call.—He who truly believes the word of God, and values duly the promised blessings, will yield a prompt and unreserved obedience to the command, however nature may start and recoil at it: and nothing but true faith will produce this self-denying, world-renouncing obedience. Such believers being justified by faith have peace with God; they will be blessed themselves, and blessings unto others, to relatives, to friends, and to neighbours, by their example, influence, and prayers, living and dying. As their friends will be rewarded, so their enemies will be punished by the Lord; though their name may not be great on earth, it shall be great in heaven: and some, who have lived long in sin, become afterwards very eminent in faith and holiness. We must not neglect the call of God to oblige our nearest relations; but we should endeavour to prevail on them to associate with us in his service; and we shall not in general be altogether unsuccessful. Wherever we go, or are, the Lord is there; and professing his truth, attending on his worship, and enjoying communion with him, we cannot but be safe, respectable, and happy. Whatever difficulties and dangers we meet with, we must never think of turning back, but must still be pressing forward; for there is no state on earth free from trials, nor any

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CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1*st. Abram's and Lot's return with great riches from Egypt,* 1—5. 2*d. A contention between Abram's herdſmen and thoſe of Lot,* 6, 7. 3*d. Abram's mild, pious, and prudent behaviour, and Lot's imprudent choice and departure,* 9—13. 5*th. The Lord's appearance and promiſes to Abram, and his worſhip,* 14—18.

AND Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the ſouth.

2 And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in ſilver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the ſouth, even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai.

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the firſt: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot alſo which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their ſubſtance was great, ſo that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a ſtrife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled there in the land.

8 And Abram ſaid unto Lot, Let there be no ſtrife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we *be* brethren.

9 *Is* not the whole land before thee? Separate thyſelf, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD deſtroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comeſt unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot choſe him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed eaſt: and they ſeparated themſelves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom.

13 But

any character from blemiſhes: famine was known in Canaan, the glory of all lands; and unbelief, with its conſequent evils, was diſcernible in Abram the father of the faithful! In heaven alone can perfect felicity and purity be found.

Magiſtrates are exalted in God's providence to be "a "terror to evil doers, and a praiſe to them that do well:" but too often they are ſlaves to their own luſts, and ſacrifice every nobler conſideration to make proviſion for the fleſh, of which they muſt one day give an account to God. And when courtiers degrade themſelves by becoming caterers to the luſts of their ſuperiors, they forfeit the honourable appellation of princes, and merit the moſt opprobious epithets. Yet even in the worſt of times and places we meet with more honour and conſcience, than we perhaps expected, and find our unbelieving fears were groundleſs. God protects his people notwithſtanding their infirmities; takes better care of them than they do of themſelves, and over-rules all things for their good: yet they ſhall not eſcape rebuke, even from thoſe who are in other reſpects their inferiors, when they act inconſiſtently with their character and profeſſion.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *South,* &c.] That is, the *ſouthern part of Canaan,* for it lay *north-eaſt of Egypt.*

V. 2. *Very rich.*] Abram's riches had been much increaſed by his journey into Egypt, even by means of his miſconduct.; God ſo over-ruling it, entirely beſides Abram's expectation or intention.

V. 6. *The land,* &c.] The former inhabitants would occupy much of the beſt land; and the remainder could not in one diſtrict ſupport ſuch large flocks and herds.

V. 7. *The,* &c.] The Canaanite and Perrizzite, being eſtranged from true religion, would ſtrictly ſcrutinize, and ſeverely animadvert upon, the conduct of thoſe, who ſo openly profeſſed themſelves the ſervants and worſhippers of the Lord.

V. 8, 9.] Abram was the elder man, the ſuperior relation, and the more eminent ſervant of God; yet for the ſake of peace, and for the credit of his religion, he gave up every perſonal conſideration, and with great temper and prudence ſupplicated his nephew, allowed him his choice, and reſted ſatisfied with the remainder. This was worthy of the friend of God, and the father of the faithful!

V. 10. *Lot lifted up,* &c.] It is ſurpriſing that Lot expreſſed no reluctance at leaving Abram's family, and the benefit of his converſation, counſel, example, worſhip, and inſtructions; and that he did not ſo much as remit to Abram the privilege of the firſt choice! But if this was faulty, it was ſtill worſe to chooſe merely from the luſt of the eye, a well-watered fruitful land, without any higher conſideration than an expectation that his ſubſtance,

13 But the men of Sodom *were* wicked, and ſinners before the LORD exceedingly.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Abram, after that Lot was ſeparated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, north-ward, and ſouth-ward, and eaſt-ward, and weſt-ward.

15 For all the land which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed for ever.

16 And I will make thy ſeed as the duſt of the earth: ſo that if a man can number the duſt of the earth, *then* ſhall thy ſeed alſo be numbered.

17 Ariſe, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee.

18 Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1ſt. A war waged againſt the king of Sodom and his allies, who were conquered and plundered, 1—11. 2d. Lot's captivity, 12. 3d. Abram's purſuit and conqueſt, and Lot's releaſe, 13—16. 4th. Abram's return, and his conference with Melchizedek king of Salem, and with the king of Sodom, 17—24.

AND it came to paſs in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellaſar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations,

2 *That theſe* made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birſha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

3 All theſe were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the ſalt-ſea.

4 Twelve years they ſerved Chedorlaomer and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 And

ſubſtance, already too large, would there become much greater.

V. 13. *Sinners*, &c.] The men of Sodom were notorious and daring tranſgreſſors; deſpiſing God, and openly defying him; and eſpecially marked by him for vengeance.

V. 15. *For ever.*] This expreſſion, when uſed concerning outward things, frequently means *for ages to come.* But the heavenly Canaan was typified, which is indeed given to the ſpiritual ſeed of Abram *for ever.*

V. 16. *As the duſt*, &c.] This promiſe muſt have put Abram's faith to a ſharp trial; for as yet he had no child; though he was far advanced in life, and had been long married.

V. 17. *Ariſe*, &c.] That is, "Go and ſurvey the inheritance allotted to thy poſterity."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though neceſſity may ſometimes drive us into places of temptation, we muſt not continue in them when the neceſſity ceaſes.—The poſſeſſion of riches, though dangerous, is not abſolutely incompatible with the life of faith and walk with God. When they are neither anxiouſly coveted, eagerly purſued, improperly confided in, nor inordinately loved; and when they come by God's bleſſing, are thankfully received, moderately enjoyed, and carefully improved, they may become an ornament of godlineſs and a means of uſefulneſs. Yet they are generally incumbrances to the poſſeſſor, and ſources of contention or ſeparation between brethren; and frequently they exclude men from comfortable ſociety, and from many ſpiritual advantages. When they are increaſed, thoſe are increaſed that eat them; which commonly creates uneaſineſs, and renders the poſſeſſion of the bleſſings of peace more precarious. Let the poor then learn contentment, and the wealthy caution and moderation, from this example. As we, who profeſs to be brethern in Chriſt, are ſurrounded with enemies and ſpies, we ſhould be careful to preſerve union, and to avoid all appearance of evil, leſt we ſhould prejudice their minds, or open their mouths againſt us; and we ought to renounce every perſonal intereſt, and to make every conceſſion for the ſake of peace. If the real ſervants of God ſo loſe themſelves, as to renounce, for temporal advantages, the ſociety of the faithful, and to eſtrange themſelves from God's ordinances, by removing to dark and wicked places, we ſhall ſhortly hear of their ſmarting ſeverely for it: whilſt the Lord will compenſate, perhaps in outward bleſſings, certainly in ſpiritual conſolations, pledges of his love, and earneſts of glory, thoſe who give up ſecular advantages for his ſake and for the cauſe and honour of the Goſpel. And in outward difficulties it is very profitable for the true believer to meditate, frequently and intenſely, on the glorious inheritance which the Lord hath in reſerve for him at the laſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—3.] This is the moſt ancient war recorded in authentic hiſtory; and probably, like many others, it would have been paſſed over in ſilence and buried in oblivion, had not Abram and Lot been concerned in it: edification, not the gratifying of curioſity, being the object of the inſpired hiſtorians. The fruitful valley of Siddim, by the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, became a large lake, called the Salt Sea, or the Dead Sea.

V. 4. *Twelve years*, &c.] After having ſubmitted for twelve years, theſe kings formed an alliance to ſhake off the yoke of this foreign prince.

V. 5—7.

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that *were* with him, and ſmote the Rephaims in Aſhteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which *is* by the wilderneſs.

7 And they returned and came to Enmiſhpat, which *is* Kadeſh, and ſmote all the country of the Amalekites, and alſo the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, (the ſame *is* Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellaſar: four kings with five.

10 And the vale of Siddim *was full of* ſlime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there: and they that remained fled to the mountain.

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's ſon, (who dwelt in Sodom,) and his goods, and departed.

13 And there came one that had eſcaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eſhcol, and brother of Aner: and theſe *were* confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *ſervants*, born in his own houſe, three hundred and eighteen, and purſued *them* unto Dan.

15 And he divided himſelf againſt them, he and his ſervants by night, and ſmote them, and purſued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damaſcus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and alſo brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women alſo, and the people.

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (after his return from the ſlaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him), at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

18 And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the prieſt of the moſt high God.

19 And

V. 5—7.] This ancient conqueror, having ſubdued all the neighbouring petty princes, and ravaged their territories, came with his victorious army to ſubjugate the king of Sodom and his allies.

V. 12. *They took Lot*, &c.] From avaricious motives Lot ſettled in fruitful but wicked Sodom, whoſe inhabitants were deſcendents of accurſed Canaan, and already ripe for vengeance: but ſpeedily their wealth tempted plunderers, and he was ſtript of all and carried captive. Had not Lot been taken, the conquerors might have gone off with their booty: but he was God's ſervant, though he had offended: he needed a rebuke, but he muſt not be ruined; eſpecially as he was brother's ſon to Abram the bleſſed, who was a bleſſing to all that were related to him.

V. 13. *Confederate*, &c.] Abram had prudently formed an alliance with theſe chiefs for mutual defence, amidſt all this violence and depredation.

V. 14—16.] Abram might have found many pretences to excuſe himſelf from this dangerous enterpriſe; and eſpecially he might have pleaded the impropriety of Lot's conduct. But he forgat all, diſregarded the difficulty and danger, feared not the numerous and victorious forces of the combined kings: and having ſo good a cauſe, as the relief of a brother in diſtreſs, in dependence on God, he boldly and without heſitation purſued them with his ſmall company.—Though averſe to war, in which he never engaged before or after that we find; he had yet trained his domeſtics for it, and put himſelf in a poſture of defence: ſome indeed underſtand it that he had trained them up in the faith and fear of God, and conſcientious obedience to him, which would render them the beſt ſoldiers for ſuch an expedition. In company however with his confederates, Abram followed the victors as far as the place, on the north borders of Canaan, where the city of Dan was afterwards built, (*Judges*, xviii. 29.)—Probably in this, and ſome other places, Ezra, or others, who took care to have correct copies of the Bible, inſerted the new names by which the places were then called, inſtead of the old ones, to render them more intelligible.—Abram, when engaged in this expedition, employed both courage and policy, attacked the enemy in the night by ſurpriſe; and, God ſo ordering it, he totally intimidated, ſubdued, and diſperſed them, recovered all, and took a great booty.

V. 18—20.] Various have been the opinions of expoſitors.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

CHAP.

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positors respecting this extraordinary person. Some have conjectured that it was Shem, who, as Abram's venerable progenitor, was entitled to this respect: while others have supposed that it was the Son of God himself supposing it impossible that any mere man should be superior to Abram. But it is inconceivable that the Apostle should say Melchizedek was "made like unto the Son of God," if he actually was the Son of God! or that Christ should be "a Priest after the order of Melchizedek," that is, after the order of himself! or that he should be a type of himself! (*Notes, Heb.* vii). Moreover he is spoken of as king of Salem, (the same place which is afterwards called Jerusalem,) and not as an appearance to Abram, such as are recorded in other instances. But the Holy Spirit seems purposely to have involved the matter in obscurity. Melchizedek was no doubt a mere man; but from which of Noah's sons he sprang, who were his immediate parents, predecessors, or successors, the Lord hath not thought good to inform us: nay, he hath intentionally concealed them; and it does not become us to enquire any further about them. He was, without doubt, an aged person, venerable for sanctity, who ruled over his subjects in righteousness, whilst they lived under him in peace; which, when oppression and violence prevailed amongst their neighbours, perhaps gave the name both to him and to his city: he also kept up the worship of the true God, and, though a king, officiated as his priest.—In all these things, and many others, he was a remarkable type of Christ; as will be more fully shewn in another place. In reverence to his age, rank, piety, and priestly character, Abram shewed him great honour, received his benediction, and gave him tithes of all his spoils, being influenced to this by some secret divine monition; perhaps being led to see in this typical character his future Lord and Saviour. At least the Spirit of God intended to instruct Abram's descendents by this action, "that a better priest should "arise than those of the family of Aaron."—No certain conclusion can be drawn from the circumstance, that Melchizedek is not mentioned elsewhere in the history, or from its not being recorded that Abram visited him either before or after. We are not sure that Abram never conversed with Shem, who lived almost as long as he, though we are no where informed that he did: and it might purposely be omitted in this case, for the above-mentioned reason.—Bread and wine constituted refreshment for Abram's weary followers: and it is remarkable that Christ hath appointed the same as the memorials of his body and blood, which are meat and drink indeed.

V. 21. *Give me*, &c.] That is, 'Release the prisoners; 'and take the spoil not only of the kings, but of Sodom 'too, as the reward of thy victory.'

V. 22—24.] Probably Abram solemnly vowed, before he set out on this expedition, that he would not take any thing which had belonged to the vanquished kings. The credit of his religious profession required that if he engaged in war, it should evidently be on the most liberal and disinterested principles. Lifting up the hand to the Lord was a customary token of taking an oath, or making a vow.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Sinners may for a season prosper, though the wrath of God abides upon them: but respites are not pardons, and prosperity often hardens and ripens men for destruction. After four hundred years the curse denounced on Canaan began to take effect: let *us* hear and fear and flee from the wrath to come.—Avarice, ambition, and the thirst of dominion are insatiable, render men savage and brutal, and have in all ages filled the earth with misery and destruction; yet God executes his righteous purposes, even by means of the unrighteousness of men.—We might have expected to hear of some calamity befalling Lot, after what we before read: and we may expect the same consequences if we imitate his example. But the Lord, though he rebuke and chasten, yet will not forsake his offending children; and therefore we must be ready to forgive and hasten to the relief of our offending brethren.—Though war can never be desirable, yet in the present state of things it may be lawful, and even advisable; and never more so, than in order to relieve the oppressed.—They who serve God, whatever means they employ, will not depend on an arm of flesh: and when they trust in him, and have a righteous cause and a good conscience, it becomes them to be bold as a lion, and not to shrink from difficulties in the path of duty: nor is any courage worthy admiration or imitation, or in the least rational, but that which springs from a believing dependence upon God, and a firm persuasion that we are prepared for life and death, and are in that place, and doing that work, which

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. The Lord encouraging Abram; his complaint that he is childless answered by promises of a numerous seed; and his justification by faith, 1—6. 2d. Abram requesting and obtaining a pledge to confirm his faith; his prophetic vision, and the covenant ratified with him, 7.—21.

AFTER these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And behold the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And

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which he has assigned us.—It is a great advantage to stand related to those who are the friends of God and the followers of him: By their means, and in answer to their prayers, such persons will often be preserved.—The Lord is the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth; all our substance belongs to him; we ought then to acknowledge his right to it, and seek his blessing on it, by consecrating a portion to his immediate service: and the tenth was early deemed, and has long continued to be considered, as a very moderate proportion.—Oaths are lawful, but should be taken with great solemnity as an act of sacred worship, and observed with great punctuality.—Nothing better becomes a profession of godliness, than a noble spirit of disinterestedness; and in our whole conduct we should study to avoid, not only evil, but the very appearance of it; especially in those things, which at first glance seem unsuitable to our profession. As the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, they who belong to him have no occasion to grasp at temporal advantages; for as far as riches are good for them, he will surely give them; and further they ought not to desire them. However, we should without censure allow many things to others, which our profession and character may render it expedient for us to deny ourselves.—But what is become of Lot? Alas! he is gone back to Sodom; for indulged corruptions are not mortified but by severe discipline.—Finally, let us remember our King of righteousness and King of peace, our Priest upon his throne: let us rejoice in his equitable and peaceful administration; and declare war against his and our enemies, Sin, the World, and Satan. Invisibly he will assist us in each conflict, and manifest himself to us after every victory, refresh us with his gracious provisions, and bless us with the earnests of his love.—And shortly, when the final victory is won, and he hath made us more than conquerors, he will applaud our achievements, accept and reward our poor services, and place us with himself upon his throne; whilst we rejoice in his love, and give him all the glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—3.] Some expositors suppose that the expression "The word of the Lord," was intended to denote *him*, whose name is elsewhere called *the Word of God*: it seems at least to have been a *visible appearance*; but this subject will hereafter be spoken of to better advantage.—Abram might be tempted to fear, lest the remains of the potent enemies, whom he had exasperated, should return with larger forces, and take vengeance on him. The Lord, therefore assured him that he was his Shield, to defend him from all his enemies; as well as his exceeding great reward, to compensate his generous behaviour to Lot, and his disinterested contempt of wealth in his conduct towards the king of Sodom. But Abram's answer seemed to say, 'As to temporal blessings, I have all and 'abound, for at present I have none to inherit my wealth 'but this stranger.—The posterity thou didst intimate to 'me, and the blessings, which are to come to all the families of the earth through the promised Seed, lie nearest my 'heart, and nothing else can satisfy me.'

V. 6. *He believed* &c.] Notwithstanding difficulties and delays, Abram, depending on the divine veracity and power, believed that it would really come to pass according to the promise. (*Note*, vi. 7.) His faith had also a special reference to Christ, as the Seed particularly intended in all the promises to him; accordingly it interested him in the Saviour's righteousness; and thus it was accounted to him, as if he had been perfectly righteous. (*Notes*, *Rom.* iii. iv. v. *Gal.* iii.)

V. 8. *Whereby shall I*, &c.] Abram desired a sign and a covenant security, for the confirmation of his faith.

V. 9—11.

9 And he ſaid unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a ſhe-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all theſe, and divided them in the midſt, and laid each piece one againſt another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcaſes, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the ſun was going down, a deep ſleep fell upon Abram: and lo, an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him,

13 And he ſaid unto Abram, Know of a ſurety that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land *that is* not their's, and ſhall ſerve them; and they ſhall afflict them four hundred years.

14 And alſo that nation whom they ſhall ſerve, will I judge: and afterward ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance.

15 And thou ſhalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou ſhalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they ſhall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.

17 And it came to paſs, that when the ſun went down, and it was dark, behold a ſmoking furnace, and a burning lamp that paſſed between thoſe pieces.

18 In that ſame day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, ſaying, Unto thy ſeed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims.

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgaſhites, and the Jebuſites.

CHAP.

V. 9—11.] The heathen nations had ſimilar forms of entering into ſolemn covenants, by cutting animals aſunder, and by the covenanting parties paſſing through the midſt of them (*Jer.* xxxiv. 18, 19). Perhaps, they were derived by tradition from this tranſaction; they denoted, however, that he who brake the covenant might expect to be in like manner cut aſunder by divine juſtice.—Abram carefully watched the ſacrifice, driving away the birds of prey that would have devoured it, and patiently waited the event.

V. 12—16.] Abram ſeems to have employed the whole day, from very early in the morning before the ſtars diſappeared, until very late at night, about this ſolemnity, and in watching and prayer. The horror of darkneſs was emblematical of the diſtreſs of his poſterity in Egypt; and perhaps of the comparative darkneſs of the diſpenſation, under which they were afterwards to continue. About four hundred years intervened betwixt this time and the deliverance of Iſrael out of Egypt; exactly 430 from Abram's call, as it is generally computed, (*Exod.* xii. 40 41.)

V. 17. *A ſmoking*, &c.] Theſe appearances repreſented the Iſraelites' ſevere trials, but gracious ſupports, and joyful deliverance. They were tokens of God's acceptance of the ſacrifice, ſymbols of his preſence, and confirmations of the covenant. Probably the ſacrifices were thus conſumed.

V. 18. *In that*, &c.] By this tranſaction the promiſes were rendered more explicit, and ratified into a covenant, which God pledged himſelf to fulfil.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who truſt in God and ſerve him, ſhould fear no enemies, for they have an omnipreſent and omnipotent Protector.—Nor need they heſitate to renounce the moſt valuable perſonal advantages for his ſake; for he will abundantly recompenſe them: yea, he himſelf will be their Shield and Portion, their exceedingly great and everlaſting reward.—Yet hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; the ſtrongeſt faith has its miſgivings, the moſt courageous ſpirit has its fears, and the moſt reſigned believer his complaints: theſe the Lord graciouſly notes, pardons, pities, and relieves.—He who in one inſtance, upon the ſingle teſtimony of God, ſtedfaſtly expects things exceedingly difficult and improbable, in the Lord's time and manner; will believe all that God hath revealed when he becomes acquainted with it, and will embrace and expect whatever he propoſes: and this man's faith ſhall be accounted to him for righteouſneſs; (*Rom.* iv. 18—25.) Yet will he ſeek, and God will grant, further tokens of his love, to confirm and ſtrengthen his faith: and he will be encouraged to conſider former mercies as earneſts of future bleſſings.—The covenant of God with ſinners has always been ratified by ſacrifice and the ſhedding of blood: and in attendence on his ordinances, we muſt wait for the confirmation of our faith, and guard againſt all intruſion upon our devotions; eſpecially thoſe vain thoughts, which are apt on ſuch occaſions to ariſe, and interrupt the exerciſe of faith, hope, and love.—The knowledge of future events would ſeldom add to our comfort: in the moſt favoured families, and moſt happy lives, there are ſuch chequered ſcenes and ſo many afflictions, that it is merciful in God to conceal from us what will befall us and ours; and we are very fooliſh if we eagerly covet ſuch information, which would not only anticipate the troubles of life, but even diſtreſs us about ſuch things as will not take place till we are in the ſilent grave, or rather in the eternal world. Yet

multitudes

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. Sarai's barrenneſs, and Abram's marriage to Hagar, 1—3. 2d. Hagar's contempt of Sarai, her reſentment and complaint, Abram's ſurrender of Hagar to Sarai's will; her hard uſage of Hagar, and Hagar's flight, 4—6. 3d. Hagar met by an angel, and ordered to return; a prophetical promiſe made to her; her obſervation on this viſion; the birth of Iſhmael, and the age of Abram, 7—16.

NOW Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children; and ſhe had an hand-maid an Egyptian, whoſe name *was* Hagar.

2 And Sarai ſaid unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath reſtrained me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her: and Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her huſband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and ſhe conceived: and when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had conceived, her miſtreſs was deſpiſed in her eyes.

5 And Sarai ſaid unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee; I have given my maid into thy boſom; and when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had conceived, I was deſpiſed in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram ſaid unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaſeth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, ſhe fled from her face.

7 And the Angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderneſs, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8 And

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multitudes far more deſire to partake with Abraham in this kind of information, than in his moſt holy faith!—God waits till iniquity be ripe, ere he puniſhes, and in the mean time gives ſpace for repentance: let the ſinner then count his long-ſuffering to be ſalvation, and improve it; and let believers alſo wait for their mercies till they are prepared for them. Finally, the growing Chriſtian will daily obtain fuller aſſurances, and more explicit knowledge, of the bleſſings of the covenant which God hath ratified with him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—3.] Ten years had elapſed ſince the call of Abram; a numerous poſterity had repeatedly been promiſed, among whom that Seed was to ariſe, in whom all the families of the earth would be bleſſed: but there were no appearance of the fulfilment of theſe promiſes. Sarai, though amiable and faithful, ſtill continued childleſs, and was now ſeventy-five years of age. The promiſe had not been expreſsly reſtricted to her: and though we never before read of a godly perſon having two wives at once; yet ſuch marriages appear to have been common, and perhaps in no bad repute in the world. Not only the natural deſire of children, but the fulfilment of thoſe promiſes in which all bleſſings centre, was concerned. It ſeemed vain to expect children by Sarai any longer; almighty power was forgotten; through unbelief carnal policy crept in; and it occurred to Sarai firſt that other means might be tried: ſhe was willing to forego all further expectation of being the mother of the promiſed Seed, and to be ſatisfied with the adoptive relation, or with ſeeing the promiſe accompliſhed to Abram; for ſhe acknowledged the hand of God in her trial, and acquieſced in his will. In this view the propoſal was made, and haſtily adopted and executed, without aſking counſel at the mouth of the Lord: but it was a bad example, a fatal precedent, and a ſource of manifold uneaſineſs.—Probably Hagar was one of the maid-ſervants whom Pharaoh had given Abram, and ſhe waited on Sarai.

V. 4—6.] Hagar was lifted up with pride and ſelf-preference; forgetting that the Lord had made the difference between her and Sarai; flattering herſelf that ſhe now ſhould ſecure Abram's affections to herſelf; and perhaps expecting the honour of being the mother of the promiſed Seed: and Sarai, inſtead of blaming herſelf for what ſhe had done, ſeemed to claim merit from it, unreaſonably blamed Abram as if he had encouraged Hagar's inſolence, and needleſsly appealed from him to the Lord. In all this much paſſion and peeviſhneſs, and a very uneaſy frame of mind, may clearly be diſcerned.—Abram acted wiſely in readily relinguiſhing Hagar, and ſhewed that he had not acted from carnal affection: but he conceded too far in leaving *her*, whom he was bound to protect, ſo entirely in the power of Sarai, whoſe mind was too embittered by paſſion to act with entire equity and impartiality; ſo that ſhe exacted her former ſervice more rigorouſly and harſhly, which in Hagar's ſituation was unjuſtifiable; and her haughty ſpirit could not endure the treatment of a ſlave, when ſhe expected the privilege of a wife.

V. 7—9.] Probably Hagar ſet out to return to Egypt, her native country; but being unable to proceed, ſhe ſat down, fatigued and overwhelmed with diſtreſs, by a fountain of water. The Angel ſpake to her, as *Sarai's ſervant*, not as *Abram's wife*. Thus her marriage was tacitly cenſured as unhallowed; and this would tend to humble her, and to convince her of ſin in deſpiſing and fleeing from her miſtreſs. By enquiring of her whence ſhe came? and whither ſhe would go? the Angel implicitly charged her with

8 And he ſaid, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence cameſt thou? and whither wilt thou go? And ſhe ſaid, I flee from the face of my miſtreſs.

9 And the Angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, Return to thy miſtreſs, and ſubmit thyſelf under her hands.

10 And the Angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, I will multiply thy ſeed exceedingly, that it ſhall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the Angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and ſhalt bear a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Iſhmael; becauſe the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him: and he ſhall dwell in the preſence of all his brethren.

13 And ſhe called the name of the LORD that ſpake unto her, Thou God ſeeſt me: for ſhe ſaid, Have I alſo here looked after him that ſeeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, *it is* between Kadeſh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bare Abram a ſon: and Abram called his ſon's name, which Hagar bare, Iſhmael.

16 And Abram *was* fourſcore and ſix years old, when Hagar bare Iſhmael to Abram.

CHAP.

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with leaving her proper ſtation, acting inconſiſtently with her duty and intereſt, forſaking her own mercies, and ruſhing on deſtruction. And by commanding her to return to her miſtreſs, he reminded her that her trouble was the conſequence of ſin, and ſhe muſt therefore patiently ſubmit to it.

V. 10, 11.] Here we learn who this Angel was who could ſay, "I will multiply thy ſeed:" He was the *Angel Jehovah*, as it may be rendered: Jehovah himſelf, yet the Meſſenger, or Angel, of the covenant—the eternal Word and Son of God. We ſhall meet with many inſtances of this hereafter. *Iſhmael* ſignifies *the Lord will hear;* "he hath heard, and therefore he will hear," *thy affliction, not thy prayer;* intimating that the relief was not only unmerited, but unſolicited.

V. 12. *And he*, &c.] This perhaps was Iſhmael's character; but his poſterity were principally intended. The numerous tribes of the Arabians, Saracens, and other deſcendents of Iſhmael, have in all ages to the preſent day been a hardy untamed race of free-booters; and have chiefly ſubſiſted by plundering their neighbours and paſſengers; as it appears by the united teſtimony of all the hiſtorians and travellers who have written of thoſe countries. They have accordingly provoked the enmity of all the neighbouring nations, and have lived in a ſtate of hoſtility with all men ever ſince. Yet have they ſet at defiance the mightieſt conquerors of all ages, and have ſtood their ground againſt them all. Eſpecially they lived in the neighbourhood of the Iſraelites and Edomites, and other deſcendents of Abram, and were never ſubjugated by any of them. They who would ſee this prophecy more particularly explained, may conſult Biſhop Newton on the Prophecies, (*Diſſ.* 1.) Thus in every age the fulfilling of prophecies forms a ſtanding miracle in proof of the divine authority of the Scriptures, which demands our attentive conſideration.

V. 13. *The name of the Lord*, &c.] Hence we may learn what Moſes thought of this Angel, whom he calls JEHOVAH; and what Hagar thought, who called his name, "Thou God ſeeſt me." She added, Have *I*, who am ſo unworthy, *here* in this deſert, out of the path of duty, and at a diſtance from the ordinances of God, been favoured with ſuch a gracious and condeſcending viſit?

V. 14. *Beer-lahai-roi.*] *The well of him that liveth and ſeeth me.* It ſeems that Hagar was now reduced to better temper, returned home, and by proper behaviour molified Sarai into more gentle treatment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In every relation and ſituation in life there is ſome croſs for us to bear; and the exerciſe of faith greatly conſiſts in patiently ſubmitting to it, waiting the Lord's time, and uſing thoſe means, and thoſe only, which he appoints and authorizes for its removal.—Much of the influence of unbelief conſiſts in impatience, and haſtily uſing unhallowed means of obtaining thoſe things, which we inordinately deſire.—Very bad things may be ſanctioned by the example of very good men, may appear in very plauſible colours, may be ſupported with ſome ſhew of reaſon, and be ſuggeſted by thoſe who are juſtly dear to us. But never have we more cauſe to be upon our guard, than when Satan thus transforms himſelf into an angel of light: then "to the law and "to the teſtimony" muſt be our appeal: "What hath God ſaid?" Then ſhould we act with deliberation, be afraid of leaning to our own underſtanding, and ſeek counſel of the Lord by inſtant prayer.—In Hagar's inſolence, in Sarai's impatience, and in Abram's uneaſineſs; again, in Sarai's ſeverity, and in Hagar's flight and diſtreſs, we ſee the effects of ſuch carnal projects, and of deviating from the original inſtitution of marriage.—They who conſent together in ſin ſhall be chaſtened together, and often correct each other. Though it is not good to indulge wrath:" yet even peace may be bought too dear; and we ought not to allow the injurious treatment of thoſe who are entitled to our protection. But it is never ſafe or prudent to quit our ſituation, under the influence of pride, impatience, and reſentment.—Though a haughty ſpirit will diſdain contradiction;

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord again appearing to Abram; ratifying the covenant; changing his name into Abraham, and Sarai's into Sarah; and instituting circumcision, 1—15. 2d. A son promised by Sarah; Abraham's laughter; his prayer for Ishmael, and the Lord's gracious answer, 16—21. 3d. The time fixed for the birth of Isaac, 22. 4th. Abraham's prompt obedience, 23—27.

AND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant;

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contradiction; yet it is best to endure it, and to consider that "yielding pacifieth great offences."—Much wisdom is contained in a proper answer to such questions, as are here proposed and implied. Recollecting *who we are* would teach us our duty, and suggest motives for quietly attending to it. Seriously enquiring in many cases, *whence we came?* may shew us our sin and folly: and considering, *whither we will go?* may often discover our danger and misery, before it be too late; and prepare us to listen to his counsel, who calls upon us to return and repent of that which we have done in pride and passion.—How free from fear and care, how conscientious in duty, watchful against sin, and resolute in resisting temptation should we be, if we always were suitably impressed with this thought, "Thou God seest me!" The good Lord, who always sees us, and despises not the meanest, but hears the affliction even before it vent itself into prayer, help us to realize his presence, to trust in his goodness, to submit to his will, and with admiring humble gratitude to acknowledge his mercies to us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1—3] This appearance of the Lord to Abram was near fourteen years after his marriage with Hagar. So long was this gracious intercourse interrupted, and his faith sharply tried with this tedious delay; which perhaps implied a rebuke for his misconduct in that transaction!—The Lord, by revealing himself as "the Almighty, or *the all sufficient* God," who was able to surmount all obstacles, and supply all wants, most powerfully enforced the subsequent exhortation to Abram, "to walk before him," without being discouraged or wearied; and to "be perfect," or not to waver and decline, but to be constantly, consistently, and entirely dependent on him, and devoted to him. Abram, hearing this, fell on his face before God, humbly adoring the divine glory, now manifested to him; and whilst he was in that posture, the Lord talked with him in a way of personal conversation.

V. 4. *As for me*, &c.] The Lord declared, that for his part he would be firm to his word, and never shrink from it, and that his covenant, which had been already established, should now be further ratified and sealed, and in due season certainly accomplished, notwithstanding delays and difficulties.—It is necessary hear to enquire what this covenant was. It is plain it was not the covenant of works; nor yet the Sinai covenant made with Israel as a nation. (*Notes*, &c. *Gal.* iii.) It was not merely a personal covenant with Abram, concerning the multiplication of his seed, and the possession of Canaan; for this is totally contrary to Paul's reasoning in the scripture above referred to: neither was it merely a covenant which respected his own salvation; though both these last be implied. The covenant and oath made with Abram, and confirmed by an oath, is fulfilled to all believers, as his children: (*Luke* i. 72, 73. *Heb.* vi. 12.—18.) and this fully shews, that it was the very covenant of grace made of God in Christ, with him as the representative of the whole family of true believers. The promised Seed was Christ, and Christians in him: Canaan typified Heaven: every blessing was conferred on Abram, through the righteousness of faith, which was sealed in circumcision: and all, who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abram, being partakers of the same covenant blessings, secured by the same oath and promise.

V. 5. *Neither shall thy name*, &c.] *Abram* signifies *a high father*; *Abraham*, *the high father of a multitude*, or *the father of mighty nations*.

V. 7. *A God unto thee*, &c.] As if Jehovah had said, 'By my grace I will enable thee to choose me as thy portion, and devote thyself to my worship and service; and 'I will answer thy expectations in becoming thine everlasting felicity.' The same is the blessedness of all the true children of Abraham: and his posterity according to the flesh had his oracles committed to them, his prophets sent to them, and his ordinances administered among them; which were vast advantages every way. (*Rom.* iii. 1, 2.)

V. 9.

nant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee, the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlaſting poſſeſſion; and I will be their God.

9 And God ſaid unto Abraham, Thou ſhalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations.

10 This *is* my covenant which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee; every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed.

11 And ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your fore-ſkin, and it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old ſhall be circumciſed among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the houſe, or bought with money of any ſtranger which *is* not of thy ſeed.

13 He that is born in thy houſe, and he that is bought with thy money, muſt needs be circumciſed: and my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh for an everlaſting covenant.

14 And the uncircumciſed man-child, whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.

15 And God ſaid unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou ſhalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *ſhall* her name *be*.

16 And I will bleſs her, and give thee a ſon alſo of her: yea, I will bleſs her, and ſhe ſhall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people ſhall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and ſaid in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and ſhall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And

V. 9. *Shalt keep*, &c.] 'Thou ſhalt obſerve this rite of 'circumciſion, as a token of thy ſubmiſſion to my will, 'and acceptance of my covenant; a profeſſion of thy faith, 'and a valued pledge of thy relation to me.'

V. 11. *Circumciſe.*] The foreſkin was ordered in circumciſion to be cut off; as intimating that depravity was communicated with the human nature, and propagated with the ſpecies; and that this depravity, called the *old man*, which is corrupt, muſt be *put off*, or mortified and deſtroyed by true believers. (*Eph.* iv. 22—24). In them the "heart is circumciſed to love the Lord," and perverſeneſs, rebellion, and enmity, are gradually deſtroyed out of it by ſanctifying grace. Circumciſion ſealed the righteouſneſs of faith; (*Rom.* iv. 11.) for wherever the circumciſion of the heart is wrought, it is an inward ſeal, that the ſinner is juſtified by the righteouſneſs of faith, as Abraham was. Circumciſion was a bloody and painful ordinance: for the ſanctification of the Spirit is vouchſafed to ſinners through the blood of Chriſt; the mortification of ſin is painful to the fleſh; and until the blood of Chriſt had been ſhed once for all, the ordinances of God were generally attended with the ſhedding of blood, but none ſince that time are ſo. Not only Abraham, and Iſaac, and his poſterity by Iſaac, were ordered to be circumciſed; but his ſon Iſhmael, and his very bond-ſervants likewiſe: for circumciſion ſealed not only the covenant of the land of Canaan to Iſaac's poſterity, but Heaven through Chriſt to the whole Church of God: and the outward ſign may belong to the whole viſible church; but the inward ſeal of the Spirit is peculiar to thoſe whom God knows, (and he alone can *know* them,) to be believers. Infants were circumciſed, becauſe a part of the viſible church; and becauſe it was a proper profeſſion of their parents' faith, and a pledge for the religious education of their children thus early devoted to God. Males only were capable of circumciſion: but in Chriſt there is no more diſtinction betwixt male or female, than betwixt Jew and Gentile. The Gentile, who embraced the Jewiſh religion, was circumciſed adult; but his future offſpring at eight days old. The uncircumciſed were ordered to be cut off: becauſe neglecting circumciſion was a rejection of the covenant; and the uncircumciſed in heart will be excluded Heaven, and ſeparated from God's people for ever.

V. 13. *My covenant*, &c.] That is, the ſeal and badge of the covenant would remain in their fleſh; in the uſe of which they would be diſtinguiſhed from other people.

V. 15. *As for*, &c.] *Sarai* ſignifies *my Princeſs; Sarah, a Princeſs*, to others, as well as to Abraham—implying how honourable her name would be in the whole Church of God, as well as in Abraham's family.

V. 17 *Fell on his face*, &c.] When Abraham heard the words of God, he proſtrated himſelf in reverential worſhip, and laughed in admiring faith and joyful gratitude. He himſelf was born when Terah was 130 years old; as it is generally calculated, (*Note*, xi. 26): but in the courſe of the laſt 100 years it ſeems to have become very uncommon for men to have children at ſo advanced an age. He had been ſo long married to Sarah, and ſhe was now ſo far advanced in years, continuing barren, that it ſeems he had given up all expectation of having ſeed by her; and previouſly to this explicit promiſe, thought that the promiſes were to be fulfilled in Iſhmael.

V. 18.

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22 And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their fore-skin, in the self-same day, as God had said unto him.

24 And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin.

25 And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin.

26 In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

CHAP.

V. 18. *O that Ishmael*, &c.] Though Abraham "*staggered* not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong "in faith giving glory to God," (*Rom.* iv. 20, 21:) yet he seems to have had a struggle with unbelief, in which he came off victorious, through the following repeated assurances which the Lord gave him. The words may, however, be interpreted as a natural desire that Ishmael might have a blessing also, though the promised Seed was not to descend from him; to which desire also the Lord returned a gracious answer.

V. 19. *I will establish*, &c.] It was the purpose of God, that Christ should descend from Isaac and his son Jacob; in that family true religion was chiefly to be supported; to them Canaan the type of heaven was granted; and they were to represent the spiritual seed of Abraham. Yet Ishmael and others, after this limitation, being at that time a part of the visible church, were commanded to be circumcised.

V. 22. *Left off talking*, &c.] The whole narration gives us the idea of a personal conference, and leaves little room, in the attentive unprejudiced mind, to doubt, but that he, who here calls himself the Almighty God, was the same who afterwards in human nature said, "I and "the Father are One;" and, "he that hath seen me, "hath seen the Father."

V. 23. *And*, &c.] Here was immediate obedience in a painful appointment, against which many objections might have been urged, and which seemed even to counteract the accomplishment of the promise sealed by it: and this obedience was not peculiar to Abraham; but imitated by his household, who seem to have made no opposition; and we hope that many of them were partakers of his faith.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Although the Lord may from time to time vouchsafe to his servants peculiar manifestations of his presence and favour; yet their daily walk with him must be maintained by that faith, which sees Him who is invisible: and they, who thus walk with him in his ordinances and commandments, shall neither be destitute of daily support, nor of seasons of refreshment from his presence. With whatever long delays and great discouragements their faith may be tried; he who tries it, will strengthen it: and they who walk before him, trust in him, and wait for him, shall never be ashamed.—We are only required to look to our own temper and conduct; and to leave all in his hands, who is all-sufficient, and almighty; and who, for the purposes of his own glory, often delays to interpose till expectation from every other quarter falls.—God's gracious condescensions should excite our reverence, and not lead us to forget who He is, and what we are.—Not only the doctrines of revelation, but the very seals of the covenant, remind us that we are guilty and polluted, evince our need of atoning blood, point to the promised Saviour, and teach us to exercise faith in him; and prove that without regeneration, sanctification by his Spirit, and the mortification of our corrupt and carnal inclinations, we cannot bear a covenant-relation to him.—Let us then remember that the true circumcision is that of the heart by the Spirit: (*Rom.* ii. 28, 29.) that they are "the true circumcision, "who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ "Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:" (*Phil.* iii. 3.) and that, both under the old and the new dispensation, many have had the external profession, and the external seal, who were never "sealed by the holy Spirit "of promise." But true faith evidences itself by prompt unreserved obedience in the most difficult instances: and if our faith be of this stamp, we may be confident that God is our God, and our everlasting portion; that the everlasting covenant is confirmed to us, by the oath sworn and the security vouchsafed to Abraham; and that he, who has given us this new heart, hath also "given us a new "name, which no man knoweth, save he who receiveth it:" (*Rev.* ii. 17.) Whilst, therefore, we thankfully receive

CHAP. XVIII.

Contents. 1st. *Another appearance of the Lord to Abraham, with the circumstances of it,* 1—8. 2d. *Enquiries after, and promises to, Sarah, with her subsequent conduct,* 9—15. 3d. *The Lord's discovery of his intended vengeance upon Sodom,* 16—22. 4th. *Abraham's intercession,* 23—33.

AND the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day.

2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.

4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that you shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said.

6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

8 And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

10 And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life: and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent-door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old, *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed will I return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then

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the pledges of his love, and make open profession of our faith, let us not forget to seek the same blessings for our children and servants, and all connected with us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. 2.] It is expressly said, that this was an appearance of Jehovah to Abraham: and the manner of it is afterwards related; by which it is probable, that there was more of familiarity, and less of visible glory and majesty, in it than in former appearances; especially in that with which he had been favoured just before. (xvii.) Abraham seems to have been waiting for an opportunity of exercising hospitality, by entertaining any weary traveller who might need refreshment and a cooling shade, (for inns were not then to be met with, as among us;) when three persons, appearing as men, presented themselves before him.

V. 3. *My Lord*, &c.] Abraham's speech was addressed to one of the three who appeared to have the pre-eminence, and whom we conclude to have been the Son of God. He seems to have been attended by two created angels in the form of men.

V. 4. *Wash your feet.*] This was customary and necessary in those hot climates, where they wore only sandals.

V. 8. *And he stood*, &c.] It does not appear whether Abraham as yet knew his guests; or whether his bowing (3.) was from civil respect, or an act of adoration.

V. 9. *Where is Sarah*, &c?] Thus the Lord gradually manifested who he was, and his attention to Abraham's concerns. Sarah was in the tent; just at hand, in her proper place, occupied about her domestic concerns.

V. 10—12.] By thus assuming divine authority; and by repeating that promise *as his own*, and engaging himself for its accomplishment, which in the foregoing chapter was spoken by the Almighty God, the speaker fully discovered who he was. The accomplishment of the promise had been delayed, until it had become, according to general observation, unprecedented; and would be deemed impossible: Sarah therefore laughed. And we perhaps might not have discerned a difference between her laughter and Abraham's: but he who searches the heart, saw the one to spring from unbelief, and the other from the joy of faith.

V. 13. *The Lord said*, &c.] Here the speaker is expressly called Jehovah.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not: for she was afraid. And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh.

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD,

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which *am but* dust and ashes.

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack* of five? and He said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And He said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

30 And he said *unto* him, O let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And He said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

32 And

V. 17. *Shall I hide*, &c.] The Lord would not conceal his intention of destroying these cities from Abraham, his servant and friend: for he was concerned in that event, both on account of Lot, and as having the inheritance of the adjacent countries covenanted to his posterity. He would also give him an opportunity to intercede for them; and shew him the reasons of his conduct, that he might afterwards approve of it, and glorify him on that account.

V. 19. *He will command*, &c.] The Lord knew that Abraham would continue to instruct, pray for, and set a good example to, his family, and use his authority to promote godliness among them; of which he had just given a remarkable instance in their circumcision: and that he would train up Isaac in the same pious manner: and the Lord would make use of these things, as the means of fulfilling his purposes of love to his posterity.

V. 21. *Will go down now*, &c.] This is spoken after the manner of men. The just Judge will not pronounce sentence upon mere rumour; but will bestow pains to ascertain the criminal's guilt, before he executes vengeance.

V. 22. *The men*, &c.] The two, whom we suppose to have been created angels, departed from Abraham at this time; and accordingly *two* entered Sodom at evening: whilst the one, who is called Jehovah, still continued with Abraham, who *stood yet before the Lord*; before the same person, with whom he had hitherto been communing: for no change is at all intimated.

V. 23—25.] Abraham here assumed it as an unquestionable truth, that the Judge of all the earth would do right, and upon that grounded his plea: but knowing how much the *righteous* Lord is inclined to mercy, he not only pleaded for preserving the righteous from the common destruction, but for sparing the rest for their sakes.

V. 26. *Fifty righteous*.] That is, really good people. (*Note*, vii. 1.)

V. 27. *But dust and ashes*.] A poor, mean, and dying, because sinful, man.

V. 32.

32 And he said, Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. Lot in Sodom visited by two angels, whom he entertained, 1—3. 2d. The base behaviour of the Sodomites, Lot's conduct, and the Sodomites smitten with blindness, 4—11. 3d. Lot warned, and in vain warning his sons in law: and his escape from Sodom, 12—23. 4th. Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. destroyed, and Lot's wife looking back struck dead, 24—26. 5th. Abraham's survey of the destruction of Sodom, &c. 27—29. 6th. Lot's drunkenness and incest, 30—38.

AND there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them*, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall arise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night.

3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.

5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him.

7 And

V. 32. *Peradventure ten, &c.*] Probably Abraham now thought he had got within the limits of Lot's family; and that among his children and servants there were ten true believers: however, if there were not that small number in Sodom and its dependencies, he must allow the justice of the sentence.

V. 33. *The Lord went, &c.*] Surely this is calculated to convey to us the idea of a personal conference, and visible appearance! But "no man hath seen God at any time; the "only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, "he hath declared him." Thence we infer that this was an anticipation of the future incarnation of the Son of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should "not be forgetful to entertain strangers; for "thereby some have entertained angels unawares;" nay, the Lord of angels himself; as indeed we always do, when for his sake we entertain one of the least of his brethren.—Chearful and ready liberality, and an obliging manner in shewing kindness, are great ornaments to true piety: and wealth, thus used, becomes indeed a blessing to the possessor, and to numbers.—Though our condescending Lord vouchsafes not to us his personal visits, yet still, by his word and Spirit, he stands at the door and knocks: when we are inclined to open, he deigns to enter; and by his gracious consolations provides a rich entertainment, "on which he sups with us, and we with him." (*Note, Rev.* iii. 20.)—Even the strongest believers need repeated confirmations of their faith, and in trying circumstances at some times stagger through unbelief (*Heb.* xi. 11.) One sin is a common introduction to another; and it is hardly to be expected that we should strictly adhere to truth ourselves, when we allow ourselves to question the divine veracity: but whom the Lord loves, he will rebuke, convict, silence and bring to repentance, if they sin against him.—The same action may be either good or bad, as it springs from opposite internal principles: and our discouragements would be much removed, and temptations prevented, did we more realize the Almighty power of God, as engaged to fulfill his largest promises.—"The secret of the Lord is "with them that fear him;" and whether he be pleased to discover to them what he does, and intends to do, or not; he will cause them to understand, and adore the justice and reasonableness of his dispensations, and shew them the glory of his works.—To use our authority in supporting religion in our families, is highly acceptable to God, and tends to bring down his blessing on our posterity; whilst the neglect of it cuts off the entail, as in the cases of Lot, and of Eli.—Although the effectual fervent prayer of righteous men availeth much, and God often grants all they ask; so that they cease to request more, before he begins to deny them: yet their prayers will not prevent the destruction of those who are hardened in impenitence, but will return into their own bosom. However, we need not fear that the Lord should be angry with those prayers, which are offered in genuine humility, faith, and love: he is well pleased with them, and will answer them, as far as it is for his glory, and our real good.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1. *And Lot sat, &c.*] We have heard nothing of Lot for many years; and we have here no

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C.R.Ryley del. Walker sculp.

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7 And ſaid, I pray you, brethren, do not ſo wickedly.

8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto theſe men do nothing: for therefore came they under the ſhadow of my roof.

9 And they ſaid, Stand back. And they ſaid *again*, This one *fellow* came in to ſojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worſe with thee than with them. And they preſſed ſore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.

10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the houſe to them, and ſhut to the door.

11 And they ſmote the men that *were* at the door of the houſe with blindneſs, both ſmall and great: ſo that they wearied themſelves to find the door.

12 And the men ſaid unto Lot, Haſt thou here any beſides? ſon in law, and thy ſons, and thy daughters, and whatſoever thou haſt in the city, bring *them* out of this place.

13 For we will deſtroy this place, becauſe the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD hath ſent us to deſtroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and ſpake unto his ſons in law, which married his daughters, and ſaid, Up, get ye out of this place; for the LORD will deſtroy this city: but he ſeemed as one that mocked unto his ſons in law.

15 And when the morning aroſe, then the angels haſtened Lot, ſaying, Ariſe, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; leſt thou be conſumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and ſet him without the city.

17 And it came to paſs, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he ſaid, Eſcape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither ſtay thou in all the plain; eſcape to the mountain, leſt thou be conſumed.

18 And Lot ſaid unto them, Oh not ſo, my Lord.

19 Behold now, thy ſervant hath found grace in thy ſight, and thou haſt magnified thy mercy, which thou haſt ſhewed unto me in ſaving my life: and I cannot eſcape to the mountain, leſt ſome evil take me, and I die.

20 Behold,

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no very pleaſing tidings concerning him. The Holy Spirit informs us that he was "a righteous man," and "was "vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked" amongſt whom he lived, and that "day by day," and in his very ſoul: (2 *Pet.* ii. 7, 8;) and we may ſuppoſe that upon the whole his example was good, and his warnings ſalutary. But he wanted firmneſs, as we may eaſily perceive from this chapter; he was not fit for ſuch a ſituation, nor able to ſet his face like a flint againſt the wicked inhabitants of Sodom: he went thither from unworthy motives, and ſtaid there with unwarrantable pertinacity: and accordingly he ſeems to have done them no good, and to have got much harm himſelf, and his family ſtill more. Yet he waited for an opportunity of entertaining ſtrangers; ſetting a good example in the midſt of triumphant abominations; and in this he imitated Abraham.

V. 2, 3.] In order to evince the cordiality of Lot's invitations, the angels at firſt declined them; but he preſſed upon them greatly, being aware that inſults awaited them in the ſtreets.

V. 4, 5.] This ſimple narration conveys more forcibly into our minds an idea of the extreme and unparalleled wickedneſs of this city, than the moſt laboured deſcriptions and rhetorical declamations could have done; and is a moſt beautiful example of ſpeaking of practices, too ſhameful to be mentioned, in language which excites no other ſenſation but horror and indignation.

V. 8. *Behold*, &c.] Lot ſhewed a becoming ſenſe of the rights of hoſpitality, in his conduct on this trying occaſion; but his propoſal was very criminal. We muſt by no means do evil that good may come; or commit a leſs ſin to prevent others from committing a greater: but relying on the divine care we ſhould determine to endure the extremeſt hardſhips rather than ſin againſt God in any particular.

V. 11. *Wearied*, &c.] Probably the perſons, thus ſmitten with blindneſs, were not ſenſible of the real cauſe by which they were baffled. (2 *Kings*, iv. 18—20.)

V. 13. *We will—the Lord hath ſent us*, &c.] This is the language of ſervants obeying orders; and very different from that before employed. (xviii. 10. 24.)

V. 14. 15.] Probably the ſons in law, here mentioned, had married other daughters of Lot, who were dead, or who periſhed in the ruin of the city.

V. 17. *Look*, &c.] Lot was forbidden to look behind

20 Behold, now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one; Oh let me escape thither, (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22 Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the LORD.

28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar, and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth.

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

33 And

him, or to appear reluctant to leave his whole substance, and that fertile plain which had before so greatly ensnared him.

V. 22. *I cannot*, &c.]—It is not clear whether the third person, who tarried with Abraham, had, or had not, now rejoined the other two; this indeed seems to be intimated by the singular number here used. The speaker, however, could not proceed to execute his commission, till Lot arrived at a place of safety.—The name *Zoar* signifies *little*. This city had been called *Bela*, and it was the only one of the five before mentioned, which was not consumed; (xiv. 2;) and being spared because it was *little*, it was afterwards called by that name.

V. 24, 25.] The language is here remarkable: "*The* "*Lord rained from the Lord out of heaven;*" and is supposed by many expositors to confirm the opinion, that He, who appeared and spake to Abraham as Jehovah, was at this time visibly present at Sodom, immediately commanding the fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy that city and the adjacent places. The judgment came, however, as a destruction from the Almighty God, and we need not enquire how he effected it. But the cities and all the inhabitants were totally destroyed; and the place where the cities stood, was converted into a great lake, called the Dead Sea; which exhibits an appearance, in many respects extraordinary, and dissimilar from other seas and lakes.

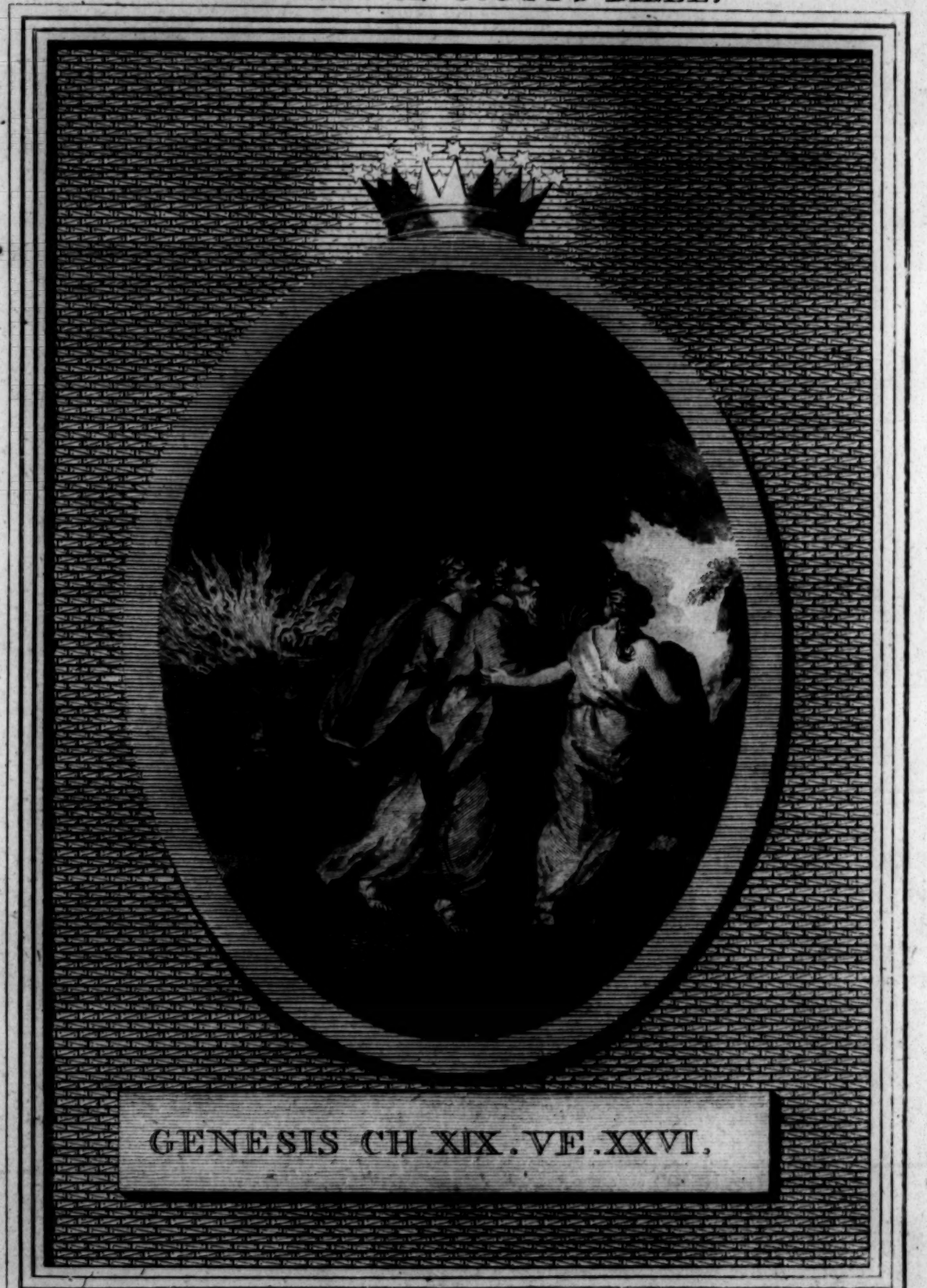
V. 26. *Looked back*, &c.] This unhappy woman, contrary to express command, probably in unbelief, and love to Sodom and its riches, regretting what was left behind, and purposing to return, *looked back;* and as some think, actually attempted to return: and our Lord's words—"Let

"him not *return back;* remember Lot's wife," favour this supposition. (*Luke* xvii. 31, 32.) She was therefore instantaneously struck dead, and petrified, and thus remained to after-ages a visible monument of the divine displeasure; being punished as a warning to others through successive generations.

V. 27—29.] Abraham rose early to enquire after the success of his prayers, and probably to renew them: but the scene he witnessed rendered that unnecessary. Yet God remembered Abraham, and rescued Lot; more in answer to his prayers, than approving of Lot's behaviour.

V. 30. *Out of*, &c.] Lot retired from the place he had chosen for himself: perhaps he found it as wicked as Sodom; and that consideration, joined to the inundating of the neighbouring plain by the obstructed waters of Jordan, might excite apprehensions for his safety. He went, therefore, to reside in the mountain, whither he was at first commanded to flee. But what hindered his return to Abraham? Doubtless he would have received him, though stript of all, and a wretched outcast. We can scarcely help attributing his conduct to a certain stoutness of spirit, pride of heart, and fear of contempt, if he should appear so degraded among those, who had known him in more prosperous days. Whatever were his reasons, he seems to "have forsaken his own mercies."—Doubtless his herdmen, as well as his herds, perished in Sodom's overthrow. What a different opinion must this give us of the character of Lot's domestics, from that which we are led to form concerning those of Abraham!

V. 31—38.] Many conjectures have been formed of the



GENESIS CH.XIX.VE.XXVI.

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33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firſt-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when ſhe lay down, nor when ſhe aroſe.

34 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that the firſt-born ſaid unto the younger, Behold, I lay yeſternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night alſo; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preſerve ſeed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night alſo: and the younger aroſe, and lay with him; and he perceived not when ſhe lay down, nor when ſhe aroſe.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the firſt-born bare a ſon, and called his name Moab: the ſame *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger ſhe alſo bare a ſon, and called his name Ben-ammi: the ſame *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

CHAP.

the motives, which induced Lot's daughters to this ſtrange conduct. But the truth ſeems to be, that they had learned no good in Sodom; and had been accuſtomed to hear and witneſs wickedneſs, till their judgments were perverted, their conſciences become unfeeling, and the ſenſe of ſhame blunted. No excuſe can be made either for them, or for Lot; or ſcarcely any account given of the affair, but this, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, "and deſperately wicked, who can know it?" After this we read no more either of Lot, or of his daughters. Peter's teſtimony ſatisfies us, that he lived to repent of his ſin, whilſt there is no proof that his daughters did. But he died under a dark cloud: all his ſubſtance, and part of his family, periſhed in Sodom: his wife in looking back loſt her life: and one would almoſt have wiſhed that his daughters had been taken away too, to have prevented his and their ſin and ſhame; for though he was not written childleſs, his poſterity were the monuments of his reproach. (xviii. 18, 19.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When angels entered Sodom they ſoon found out, and conſorted with, the only righteous man reſiding there. Thus they ſtill inviſibly encamp round them that fear the Lord: and thus we ought to ſeek out, and aſſociate with, the righteous in every place to which we go. Nor is it hard to diſtinguiſh them; for by their fruits we may know them, and by the hatred which the wicked bear them. Hoſpitality, prudently ſhewn for the Lord's ſake, will engage his protection and a gracious recompence.—But to what a pitch of wickedneſs do ſome ſinners arrive! and who does not allow the juſtice of God in the deſtruction of abandoned Sodom? Could our eyes at once behold all thoſe abominations, which the Lord every moment witneſſes in other cities and countries, we ſhould probably expect that they would ſhare Sodom's doom. And "except the Lord of Hoſts had left unto *us* a very ſmall "remnant, even we ſhould ere this have been like unto "Sodom and Gomorrah." The good Lord increaſe that remnant.—But when at the day of judgment God ſhall bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and manifeſt the counſels of all hearts; and when the wicked ſhall "ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire:" (*Jude* 7:) then we ſhall ſee that the Lord hath not without cauſe denounced the dreadful ſentence; but ſhall wonder at his patience and long-ſuffering towards them.—Nothing marks ſinners more ripe for deſtruction, than when, being mad upon their luſts, they reſent the leaſt check, and will bear no controul; for "he, that being often reproved hardeneth "his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that with-"out remedy."—They, who treat the friendly warnings of God's ſervants and miniſters as idle tales and groundleſs fears, will be awefully convinced of their miſtake by the event.—"But the ſalvation of the righteous is of the "Lord:" being merciful to them, he warns them, and ſuffers them not to neglect the warning, neither leaves them to the effect of their procraſtinating folly; but by the mixed influence of hopes and fears, he diſpoſes them to leave all for the ſalvation of their ſouls, and even condeſcends to pity, and accommodate himſelf to, their infirmities.—Let us, however, at the ſame time remark his aweful ſeverity on apoſtates: let us remember Lot's wife, and not allow one hankering wiſh after forbidden or forſaken objects; and let us be much afraid, leſt, "after "having eſcaped the corruption which is in the world, "through the knowledge of Chriſt, we ſhould be again "entangled and overcome thereby." For though the Lord will not forſake his people, the ſeverity of his multiplied chaſtiſements may well fill our ſouls with holy awe: and if he purſue his children with the rod even unto the grave, what will be the dreadful doom of his enemies?—It is grievous to obſerve, that chaſtiſement ſeems in ſome caſes to loſe its effect; that for a time they who are corrected ſin more and more; and that thoſe who have eſcaped contamination amongſt bad examples, are overcome in ſolitude, and remain unimpreſſed by the aweful judgments which they have witneſſed. Theſe may expect to ſuffer more and more, and to die in uncertainty and diſhonour: and it is an evident fact, that the children do ſuffer for their parents' ſin. Let us then watch and pray that we enter not into temptation; and eſpecially guard againſt covetouſneſs and drunkenneſs, which are inlets to all other crimes.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1*ſt. Abraham going to ſojourn in Gerar, and denying his wife, who was taken into Abimelech's houſe,* 1, 2. 2*d. Abimelech warned of God in a dream, reſtoring Sarah, and expoſtulating with Abraham,* 3—13. 3*d. His kindneſs to Abraham and Sarah, with a mild rebuke of the latter,* 14—16. 4*th. Abraham's prayer anſwered,* 17, 18.

AND Abraham journeyed from thence toward the ſouth-country, and dwelled between Kadeſh and Shur, and ſojourned in Gerar.

2 And Abraham ſaid of Sarah his wife, She *is* my ſiſter. And Abimelech king of Gerar ſent, and took Sarah.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and ſaid to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou haſt taken: for ſhe *is* a man's wife.

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he ſaid, LORD, wilt thou ſlay alſo a righteous nation?

5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my ſiſter? and ſhe, even ſhe herſelf, ſaid, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands, have I done this.

6 And God ſaid unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didſt this in the integrity of thy heart; for I alſo withheld thee from ſinning againſt me: therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore reſtore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live: and if thou reſtore *her* not, know thou that thou ſhalt ſurely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

8 Therefore Abimelech roſe early in the morning, and called all his ſervants, and told all theſe things in their ears: and the men were ſore afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and ſaid unto him, What haſt thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee that thou haſt brought on me, and on my kingdom a great ſin? thou haſt done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech ſaid unto Abraham, What ſaweſt thou, that thou haſt done this thing?

11 And Abraham ſaid, Becauſe I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will ſlay me for my wife's ſake.

12 And yet indeed *ſhe is* my ſiſter; ſhe *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and ſhe became my wife.

13 And it came to paſs, when God cauſed me to wander from my father's houſe, that I ſaid unto her, This *is* thy kindneſs which thou ſhalt ſhew unto me; at every place whither we ſhall come, ſay of me, He *is* my brother.

14 And Abimelech took ſheep and oxen, and men-ſervants, and women-ſervants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and reſtored him Sarah his wife.

15 And

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—3.] Gerar was afterwards inhabited by the Philiſtines. Abimelech took Sarah probably with intent to eſpouſe her, though he had already one wife, or more. (17.) It ſeems ſhe ſtill retained her beauty; which appears ſtrange to us, now the life of man has been for ſo many ages confined within ſuch narrow limits: but it might not be ſo remarkable at that time. Probably Sarah was now pregnant, though not diſcernibly; which would increaſe both her anxiety, and that of Abraham; as it was alſo an aggravation of their ſin.—The method of becoming acquainted with the will of God by dreams was common, before revelation by the written word was afforded and completed: (*Job* iv. 12—21. xxxiii. 15:) but every impreſſion of that kind, and indeed all other ſuppoſed information of the divine will, muſt now be tried by the infallible and perfect ſtandard of the holy Scriptures; and no further regarded than they are agreeable to them and warranted by them.—Abimelech was threatened with certain and ſudden death, unleſs he reſtored Sarah.

V. 4. *Wilt thou*, &c.] In this queſtion Abimelech referred to the late deſtruction of Sodom, which doubtleſs produced much conſternation and ſome reformation in the neighbouring places. Probably he and his people were not only free from Sodom's abominations, but had ſome remains of true religion amongſt them.

V. 7. *Prophet*, &c.] That is, 'One peculiarly favoured with communion with God, and communications from him, for his own benefit and that of others.'

V. 16

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.

17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare *children*.

18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1st. The birth and circumcision of Isaac, and the joy of Abraham and Sarah on that occasion, 1—7. 2d, Isaac weaned; Ishmael mocking; he and his mother cast out; their distress and deliverance, with the prosperity and marriage of Ishmael, 8—21. 3d. The covenant betwixt Abimelech and Abraham, 22—32. 4th. Abraham's sojourning and conduct in the land of the Philistines, 33, 34.

AND the LORD visited Sarah as he had said; and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being

V. 16. *Thy brother*, &c.] 'He, whom thou hast sinfully called thy brother, is thy husband: and thou shouldest have avowed the relation, and appeared with a vail, or other distinguishing tokens of the married state; that others might have been kept from looking upon thee, and from being tempted to covet another man's wife.'

V. 17, 18.] God had inflicted these disorders on Abimelech and his family, to restrain him from defiling Sarah, to warn him to restore her, to put an honour upon Abraham and upon prayer, and thus to promote the knowledge of himself and the glory of his name.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

With much concern we here notice even *the father of the faithful* manifesting distrust of God and undue solicitude about life, equivocating with intent to deceive, relapsing into his former sin, drawing in Sarah to share his guilt, exposing her honour and chastity, and even endangering a question about the legitimacy of his promised Isaac; throwing temptation into Abimelech's way; occasioning affliction to him and his family; exposing himself and Sarah to just rebukes, and yet vainly attempting an excuse, which at least did not at all mend the matter. Shall we commend, or imitate Abraham in these things? by no means. They are written for our warning, that, "whilst "we think we stand, we may take heed lest we fall." Even Abraham hath not whereof to glory; for he cannot be justified by his works, but must be indebted for justification to "that righteousness of God which is *upon all*, and *unto* "*all* them that believe."—We must not then condemn all as hypocrites who relapse into sin, even with aggravation, if they do not continue in it; nor need we ourselves despair, if we are humbly conscious of having done so. But let the unhumbled and impenitent take heed to themselves; for their case is unspeakably perilous; and let all men dread the thoughts of "sinning on that grace may abound." On the other hand though we cannot but blame some things in Abimelech, and observe that indulgence gives force to all our passions, and where men transcend the rule of God's word they will never know where to stop: yet we must commend and should imitate him, in the calmness and mildness of his reproof, his ready return of good for evil, and the salutary counsel which he gave to Sarah: and we are pleased to find that he mentions adultery as an horrible crime, and being led into a sin as a great injury; and so seriously expostulates with Abraham about his misconduct in that respect.—Though we are all sinners, and cannot be justified before God according to his holy law; yet, in particular instances, we may be so conscious of *integrity*, as with propriety to appeal to God himself respecting it, and he will allow our plea: it is however, difficult, under divine rebukes, to vindicate ourselves without seeming to reflect upon his righteousness. —We often disquiet ourselves, and even are led into temptation and sin, by groundless suspicions, and find the fear of God where we least expected it.—Combinations to deceive generally issue in shame and sorrow: and restraints from sin, though by suffering, should thankfully be acknowledged. But though the Lord rebuke, yet he will pardon and deliver, his people, and for his own glory put honour upon them and their prayers. He will give them favour in the sight of those with whom they sojourn; and over-rule even their very infirmities, when they are humbled for them, for good to themselves and others.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *Visited*, &c.] This word is used to denote the visible effects of God's presence and power, either in mercy or in judgment: here it signifies his gracious attention to Sarah, and his faithful accomplishment of his promise; when in the natural course of things her conception could never have been expected.

V. 3. *Isaac*, &c.] *Isaac* signifies *laughter*: this name was given him in obedience to God's command, in

being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his ſon Iſaac was born unto him.

6 And Sarah ſaid, God hath made me to laugh, *ſo that* all that hear will laugh with me.

7 And ſhe ſaid, Who would have ſaid unto Abraham, that Sarah ſhould have given children ſuck? for I have borne *him* a ſon in his old age.

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feaſt the *ſame* day that Iſaac was weaned.

9 And Sarah ſaw the ſon of Hagar, the Egyptian, which ſhe had borne unto Abraham, mocking.

10 Wherefore ſhe ſaid unto Abraham, Caſt out this bond-woman, and her ſon: for the ſon of this bond-woman ſhall not be heir with my ſon, *even* with Iſaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's ſight, becauſe of his ſon.

12 And God ſaid unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy ſight, becauſe of the lad, and becauſe of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath ſaid unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called.

13 And alſo of the ſon of the bond-woman will I make a nation, becauſe he *is* thy ſeed.

14 And Abraham roſe up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, (putting *it* on her ſhoulder,) and the child, and ſent her away: and ſhe departed and wandered in the wilderneſs of Beer-ſheba.

15 And the water was ſpent in the bottle, and ſhe caſt the child under one of the ſhrubs.

16 And ſhe went, and ſat her down over againſt *him*, a good way off, as it were a bow-ſhot: for ſhe ſaid, Let me not ſee the death of the child. And ſhe ſat over againſt *him*, and lifted up her voice and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad: and the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and ſaid unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.

18 Ariſe, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation.

19 And

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remembrance of Abraham's believing and Sarah's unbelieving, laughter, and as an expreſſion of joy and gratitude.

V. 9. *Sarah ſaw*, &c.] Iſhmael was at this time fifteen or ſixteen years of age. It appears that his mocking was in deriſion of Iſaac, as the child of promiſe; and a ſpecies of perſecution; being done in profane contempt of the covenant and promiſe, in oppoſition to the purpoſe of God, and with ſome indications of malice againſt Isaac.

V. 10. *Caſt out*, &c.] Sarah ſeems to have been actuated in ſome meaſure by diſdain and reſentment in requiring Abraham to ſend away Hagar and Iſhmael: yet ſhe was ſecretly led to utter words, which imply a great myſtery, and which were afterwards to be made uſe of to illuſtrate an important part of divine truth. (*Gal.* iv. 22—31.)

V. 11. *Becauſe*, &c.] Abraham was grieved that Iſhmael ſhould ſo miſbehave, and that Sarah ſhould require ſo ſevere a puniſhment; and he might alſo be perplexed in his thoughts, about the manner in which he could reconcile the duty he owed to his ſon with his affection to his wife.

V. 12. *For in Iſaac*, &c.] From Iſaac the Meſſiah would deſcend, in his line true religion would be maintained, and his poſterity typified the ſpiritual ſeed the believing children of Abraham.

V. 14—19.] *Bread and water* denote neceſſaries for the journey, probably into Egypt to Hagar's relations. Iſhmael was about ſixteen years of age: yet the proviſions were put upon Hagar's ſhoulder, as more inured to labour, and the lad was committed to her care. She *wandered*, or *loſt her way*, which accounts for their diſtreſs; yet it does not appear that the proviſions were conſumed, or that Abraham ſent them away without money; but the water was ſpent, which it would ſoon be. Thus by wandering about in that hot climate, Iſhmael was overcome with fatigue and thirſt, and ready to die; and Hagar aſſiſted him in reaching the ſhade of ſome ſhrubs, and lying down in the beſt manner of which his circumſtances would admit. This is all that the language implies, though our tranſlation leads many perſons to form a different idea of the tranſaction. In this emergency, the Lord heard the voice of Iſhmael's groaning, perhaps of his prayer, and he addreſſed Hagar, ſaying, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear "not." Intimating that the promiſe, which was made to her before, (xvi. 10—13,) was a full ſecurity that Iſhmael ſhould not die at this time, and that therefore her anguiſh was needleſs, and her fear groundleſs. She ought rather to do all ſhe could for him, by ſupporting him in his fainting: at the ſame time the Lord directed her attention to a relief, which was near at hand, but not before obſerved by her.

V. 20

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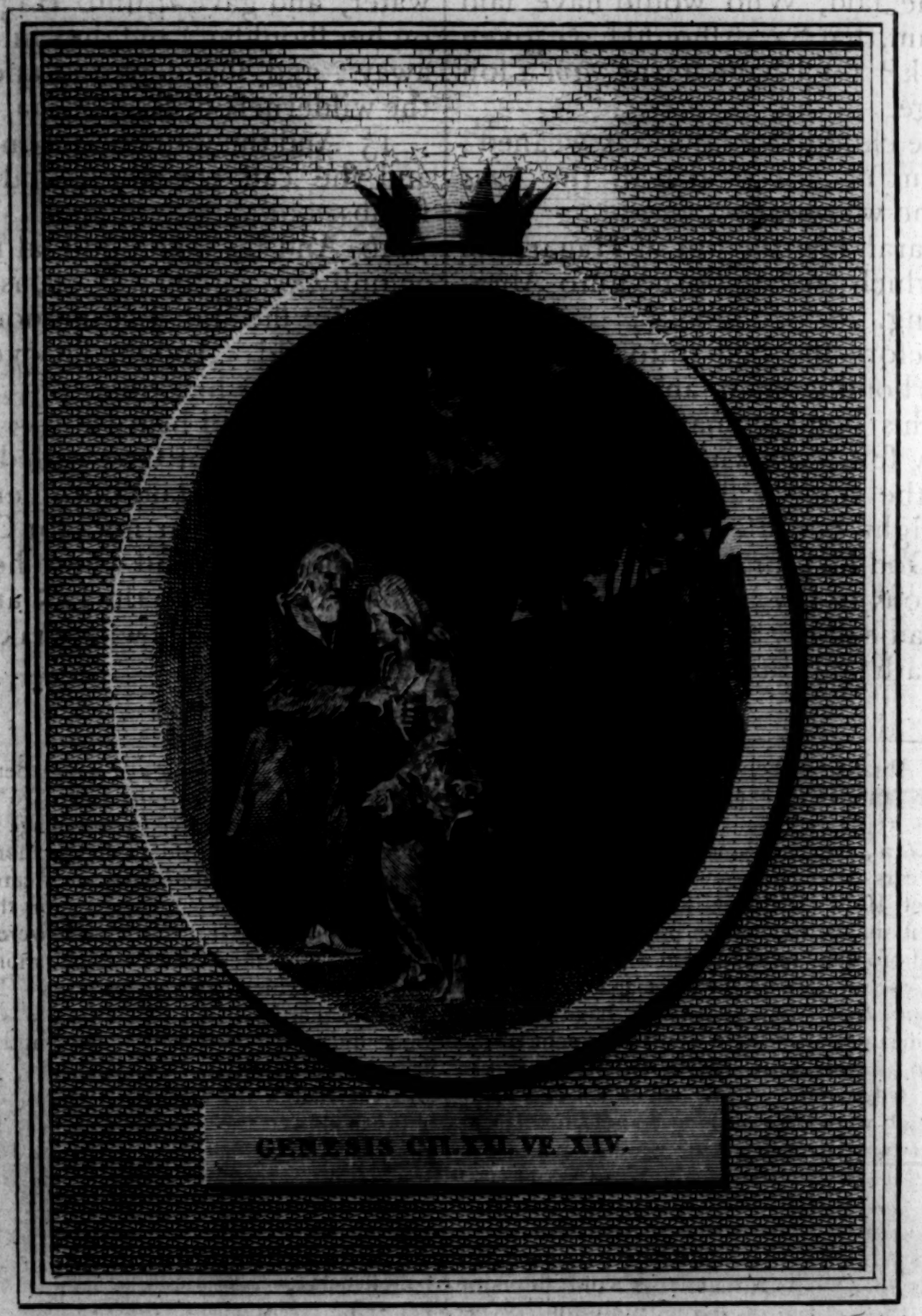

GENESIS CH. XII. VE. XIV.

Dayes del. Taylor Sc.

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BRITISH
29 AP 92
MUSEUM

Engravd for the Revd Mr Scotts Family Bible.

GENESIS. CH: XXI. VE: XV.

C. R. Ryley del.

W. S. Wallis sculp.

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19 And God opened her eyes and ſhe ſaw a well of water: and ſhe went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderneſs, and became an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderneſs of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

22 And it came to paſs at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his hoſt ſpake unto Abraham, ſaying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doeſt.

23 Now therefore ſwear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falſely with me, nor with my ſon, nor with my ſon's ſon; *but* according to the kindneſs that I have done unto thee, thou ſhalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou haſt ſojourned.

24 And Abraham ſaid, I will ſwear.

25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech becauſe of a well of water which Abimelech's ſervants had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech ſaid, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didſt thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it* but today.

27 And Abraham took ſheep, and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them made a covenant.

28 And Abraham ſet ſeven ewe-lambs of the flock by themſelves.

29 And Abimelech ſaid unto Abraham, What mean theſe ſeven ewe-lambs which thou haſt ſet by themſelves?

30 And he ſaid, For *theſe* ſeven ewe-lambs ſhalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witneſs unto me, that I have digged this well.

31 Wherefore he called that place Beerſheba: becauſe there they ſwear both them.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beerſheba: then Abimelech roſe up and Phichol the chief captain of his hoſt, and they returned into the land of the Philiſtines.

33 And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beer-ſheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlaſting God.

34 And Abraham ſojourned in the Philiſtines' land many days.

CHAP.

V. 20. *God was*, &c.] God proſpered Iſhmael in his providence: nor can we poſitively conclude, either from his miſbehaviour, general character, or the typical meaning of his expulſion from Abraham's family, that he lived and died deſtitute of the ſpecial grace and favour of God. He became, however, an archer, and thus in his perſon the prophecy concerning him began to be accompliſhed, as it hath been ever ſince in his poſterity. (xvi. 12.)

V. 22, 23.] Abimelech was convinced that the promiſes of God would be fulfilled to Abraham; he was therefore deſirous of ſecuring his friendſhip, and the benefit of it, to himſelf and to his poſterity: we may alſo hope, that this was the effect of *faith* in Abimelech. (1 *Sam.* xx. 12—17.)

V. 25. *A well*, &c.] Wells of water, being ſcarce, were conſequently very valuable in thoſe countries.

V. 31. *Beer-ſheba.*] *The well of the oath.*

V. 33. *Planted*, &c.] Perhaps Abraham planted this grove to ſhelter his tent; and to form a ſhade for the performance of ſacred worſhip, which was at that time uſually performed in the open air.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed are they whoſe hope is in the Lord, and who patiently wait for him. Their expectations ſhall certainly be anſwered, and even exceeded. Though the delay may ſeem long, and the exerciſe of their faith and patience ſharp; yet they ſhall know and acknowledge, that their bleſſings were only delayed, that *they* might have them with additional comfort, by perceiving more plainly the Lord's power, love, and faithfulneſs in them, and that *he* might have all the glory. Though the Lord does not relieve and comfort when we ſhould chooſe it; yet he will always obſerve his own ſet time, which is the beſt that infinite wiſdom can ſelect: and they, who uprightly ſerve him, ſhall never be aſhamed of any thing, but of their mixtures of unbelief, and of the ſcantineſs of their expectation, which ſhame ſhall be ſwallowed up in their thankful joy for the largeneſs of his performances.—If he keep his ſet time in giving bleſſings; we muſt obſerve the appointed ſeaſon for performing his commandments, and not ſuffer any conſideration to influence us to omit, or defer our obedience.—But grievous things ſpeedily follow joyous events in this world, and the effect of former miſcarriages often interrupts the ſatisfaction of preſent proſperity. Even children are more certain cares than comforts: their ill behaviour and contentions, and the fear or pain of parting with them, much alloy the pleaſure which we might otherwiſe take in them. But in all our anxieties we ſhould obſerve the directions, obey the commandments, and depend on the promiſes and providence of God: and thus caſting our care upon

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. Abraham tried by the command to ſacrifice his ſon Iſaac; and the ſtrength of his faith manifeſted by his prompt obedience, 1—11. *2d. Abraham prevented from ſlaying his ſon, and a ram appointed and offered in his ſtead,* 12, 13. *3d. A name given to the place where theſe things were done; and the covenant renewed with Abraham,* 14—19 *4th. Some account of Nahor's family,* 20—24.

AND it came to paſs after theſe things, that God did tempt Abraham, and ſaid unto him, Abraham: and he ſaid, Behold, *here* I *am*.

2 And he ſaid, Take now thy ſon, thine only *ſon* Iſaac, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham roſe up early in the morning, and ſaddled his aſs, and took two of his young men with him, and Iſaac his ſon; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and roſe up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and ſaw the place afar off.

5 And

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upon him, our minds will be kept in peace; and he will take care of thoſe whom we love, when we are no longer able to do it.—Let us not, however, neglect to notice the ſecret working of the Lord in this domeſtic tranſaction; nor overlook the inſtruction given us, not to reſt in external privileges, or in our own performances, leſt we be outcaſts with Iſhmael; but to ſeek the bleſſings of the new covenant by faith in its divine Surety, and that grace and ſpirit of adoption, which mark the children and heirs of God, and enable them to walk at liberty in his commandments, and chearfully to expect the fulfilment of his promiſes. Let us further recollect, that all our deſpondencies and complaints ariſe from forgetfulneſs of God's word; that relief is often nearer than we perceive; and that the Lord always hears the prayer of faith, and frequently the very cry of diſtreſs.—It is our wiſdom to connect ourſelves with thoſe who are bleſſed of God; and becoming to make requitals of kindneſs, and aſſurances of our good intentions, to thoſe who have been kind to us.—Punctuality in agreements guards againſt contention: mild reproof of the perſon himſelf, where we ſuppoſe that we have been injured, is more becoming, than to ſpeak of his miſconduct to others: and wherever we ſojourn, we muſt neither neglect, nor be aſhamed of the worſhip of Jehovah, the everlaſting God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1 *God did tempt*, &c.] The Lord put Abraham's faith and obedience to the *trial*, and this neceſſarily involved a *temptation* to unbelief and diſobedience. As he ſtood the trial, it proved an occaſion of manifeſting the ſtrength of his faith, and the greatneſs of his grace; but had he refuſed obedience, it would have diſcovered the force and prevalence of in-dwelling ſin. In the Engliſh language the word *trial* is generally uſed in a good, and the word *temptation* in a bad ſenſe: but the ſame diſtinction is not found in the original languages. How then, it will be ſaid is this paſſage reconcilable with the aſſertion of the apoſtle, "that God cannot be tempted "of evil, neither tempteth he any man?" (*James* i. 12—14.) In anſwer to this, it may be proper to ſtate a few things reſpecting trials and temptations:—All theſe

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have reference to the prevailing diſpoſition of the heart; —to the concurring influence of foreign agency;—and to the external circumſtances in which a man is placed. If the prevailing diſpoſition of the heart be ſinful, God is not the author of it, nor of the temptation which ariſes from it. "Let no man ſay I am tempted of God: for "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his "own luſt, and enticed." Satan exerts his influence on the ſinful inclinations of the heart, probably through the imagination; and by the ſcenes which he there preſents, he ſtirs up and gives force to ſinful paſſions. This muſt in no wiſe be aſcribed to God: as he did not originally implant evil propenſities, ſo he never operates upon the mind directly, to excite or increaſe them.—But the peculiar circumſtances in which his providence places us, as well as the ſervices to which he calls us, frequently give occaſion both to our ſinful diſpoſitions to diſcover themſelves, and to Satan to work upon them; though they have no tendency in themſelves to produce ſin, and are all appointed in perfect wiſdom and holineſs. Had the young man who applied to Chriſt, (*Matt.* xix. 16—22,) been as much under the influence of holy diſpoſitions, as Abraham was, the command given him would have excited him to perform a moſt exalted act of obedience, and to ſhow the greatneſs of his faith and love: had Abraham, when tried, been as much under the power of unbelief and worldly attachments, as that young man was, he would have been overcome by the temptation, and have diſobeyed. If ſenſual luſt had been as habitually ſubjugated in David, as it was in Joſeph; and eſpecially had the fear and love of God, and the ſenſe of his preſence been, in the hour of trial, as ſtrong in the one as it was in the other; the ſight of Bathſheba would not have occaſioned adultery, but have induced him to exerciſe ſelf-denial: and had Joſeph been in as careleſs and ſenſual a frame of mind, as David at that time was, he would certainly have yielded to the temptation. This holds good in all caſes: the prevalence of ſin makes even the holy law of God an occaſion of exciting all manner of concupiſcence; and the very Goſpel of evidencing ſtill deeper malignity. But the prevalence of holineſs in the heart turns the moſt horrid temptations into occaſions of ſhewing the ſtrength of our faith and love to God. Now we ought

not

5 And Abraham ſaid unto his young men, Abide ye here with the aſs; and I and the lad will go yonder and worſhip, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid *it* upon Iſaac his ſon; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together.

7 And Iſaac ſpake unto Abraham his father, and ſaid, My father: and he ſaid, Here *am* I, my ſon. And he ſaid, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham ſaid, My ſon, God will provide himſelf a lamb for a burnt-offering: ſo they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar

not to be of an unholy diſpoſition; and God originally made no creature unholy, but all very good: the trials, therefore, which his providence or precepts make of us, are in themſelves occaſions of ſhewing our obedience; and only become temptations to ſin, through our evil diſpoſitions, and through ſatanical influence. But as in fallen man the diſpoſition to holineſs is firſt implanted, and afterwards maintained and increaſed, by the Holy Spirit; the bleſſed effects of it are to be wholly aſcribed to his grace, from whom every good gift comes, and from whom nothing elſe can proceed. (*James* i. 13—18.) When, therefore, we are told that "God tempteth no man;" it means that he is not the author of ſin, either in the principle, exerciſes, or effect. When we pray, "not to be led into "temptation," we deſire that we may not be placed in ſuch circumſtances as would give Satan an advantage over us, through the depravity of our nature, or the weakneſs of our grace; and that the Lord would reſtrain Satan, mortify corruption, and increaſe his grace in our hearts: and when God is ſaid to *tempt us*, it means, that he puts our faith and love to the trial, for our comfort and benefit, and for his glory, if we ſtand the trial; but if we fail, the blame and ſhame are our own.

V. 2. *Take now*, &c.] Every word in this ſurpriſing command ſeems marked with emphaſis of terror, when we conſider it as directed to a tender parent: Thy ſon—thine only ſon—even Iſaac—whom thou loveſt.—Go into the land of Moriah—then, after that long journey, offer him there for a burnt-offering, ſhed his blood, and burn his body to aſhes. How many objections might Abraham have ſtarted to this command? He might have urged the divine prohibition of murder; and the evil report ſuch an action would bring upon his character, the religion which he profeſſed, and the God whom he worſhipped: he might have pleaded the fatal conſequences of ſuch an example; and even the very promiſes and covenant of God ratified again and again with him. But, aſſured that it was a divine command, he reſolved the whole into the infinite wiſdom, juſtice, holineſs, faithfulneſs, goodneſs, and power of God: and neither heſitated nor objected. Nay, the very energy of the command, compared with paſt mercies received, and the promiſes made to him ſuggeſted a reſolution; and it ſeems Abraham expected that God would from the aſhes immediately reſtore his ſon to life, though there had never been an inſtance of a dead perſon raiſed again from the beginning of the world. (*Heb.* xi. 19.)—The temple was built on mount Moriah, which was doubtleſs in the land of Moriah, (2 *Chron.* iii. 1.) This therefore muſt have been ſome adjacent mountain: and there is no improbability in the general opinion, that it was mount Calvary, where Chriſt the great Anti-type was afterwards crucified, and that it was ſelected with reference to that event; though Calvary was at ſome diſtance from the temple.

V. 3, 4.] Abraham ſeems not to have felt that anguiſh or anxiety, which might have been expected from the nature of the command that had been given him: ſo that neither Sarah, nor his attendents, nor even Iſaac, appear to have perceived any thing unuſual in the manner with which he ſet about it. He did not inform Sarah, leſt her feebler faith and more tender frame might not ſupport ſo ſevere a ſhock: or leſt ſhe ſhould ſtart ſome objection, or make oppoſition to the heavenly mandate. Until the third day Abraham's faith was in the fiery trial, that his obedience might not appear the reſult of raſh precipitation, but of calm deliberation; and then he *ſaw the place*, marked out by ſome ſuch appearance of glory, as he had been accuſtomed to behold in token of the divine preſence.

V. 5. *Abide*, &c.] The ſervants were left behind, that there might be no diſturbance given by their affectionate, but ill-timed, interpoſition: and when it was ſaid, *we will come again to you*, (in the plural number,) it indicated an expectation that, notwithſtanding the intended ſacrifice, Iſaac, being raiſed from the dead, would return with his father.

V. 6. *Laid it*, &c.] By this it appears that Iſaac was grown up. In this he typified Chriſt bearing his croſs.

V. 7, 8.] Iſaac's queſtion, ſo full of conſideration and filial reſpect, muſt have tended to put Abraham's reſolution to the ſharper trial: but he deemed it not proper as yet to diſcloſe the ſolemn buſineſs; and the Holy Spirit by his mouth ſeems to have predicted the Lamb of God, which he hath provided, and "which taketh away the "ſin of the world."

V. 9. *Bound his ſon*, &c.] Probably Abraham previouſly explained to Iſaac the nature and obligations of the divine command, the principle of his obedience, and the expectation of his faith in reſpect of the event: to this Iſaac yielded ſubmiſſion and concurrence, for certainly he attempted no eſcape or reſiſtence; but like Him whom he typified, he yielded up himſelf voluntarily to be a ſacrifice. When he lay bound upon the altar, he typified Chriſt, as bound by the officers of the high prieſt, and as nailed to the croſs.

altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the Angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15 And the Angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time.

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19 So

V. 10. *Took the knife*, &c.] With firmness and calm determination, as if it had been an ordinary sacrifice.

V. 11. *Called*, &c.] Abraham was allowed to proceed thus far, that his obedience might be complete: at this crisis he was stopped, for it was not God's intention that Isaac should actually be sacrificed. In this transaction it was intimated that nobler blood than that of animals, even the blood of the only begotten Son of God, was in due time to be shed for sin: but in the mean while, that the Lord would in no case have human sacrifices used, as typical of it; although it is evident that he has a right to remand the life which he gave, in what manner he pleases.

V. 12. *I know*, &c.] The Lord knew the reality and vigour of Abraham's piety previously to this trial; but he saw good to require experimental evidence of it, for the glory of his own grace, for Abraham's comfort, and for the benefit of his whole church.—The fear of God is frequently put for the whole of true religion, being an essential part of it, and necessarily connected with all the rest. It seems to comprise a reverential regard to the divine majesty, authority, presence, and purity; an influential dread of God's displeasure, accompanied with a desire and hope of his favour; (otherwise it would drive us from him, inspire hard thoughts, excite enmity, and discourage all endeavours to please him;) (*Matt.* xxv. 24, 25;) a submissive acquiescence in his appointments, a conscientious obedience to his commandments, and a serious devoted attendence on his worship, in his holy ordinances: nor can it be ever separated from a real belief of his truth, and a cordial acceptance of his salvation, as far as we are acquainted with them; or from love, gratitude, and other holy affections. In proportion as faith and hope deliver the soul from terror, humble admiring reverence of God will be increased: and when perfect love shall have cast out, entirely and finally, that fear which hath torment; the filial reverential regard to God, as our adorable Friend and Father, will be enlarged and perfected for ever, even as it is in the holy angels.

V. 13. *A ram*, &c.] The ram now became the type of the sacrifice of Christ's death, and indicated what sort of prefigurations of that event God would approve and accept. Isaac thus rescued, after having been three days under the sentence of death, and living to be the progenitor of the promised innumerable posterity, represented the Saviour rising on the third day, "to see his seed, and "prolong his days, that the pleasure of the Lord might "prosper in his hand." (*Isai.* liii. 10.)

V. 14. *Name*, &c.] *Jehovah-jireh* signifies *the Lord will see* or *provide*, alluding to the expression before used, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." The latter clause should certainly be translated, *In the mount the Lord will appear*; that is just in the crisis, as he did upon the mount to Abraham. This name became a proverbial expression, similar to that in our language, 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity.'

V. 16—18.] "Because he could swear by no greater, the "Lord sware by himself;" thus he solemnly pledged the honour of his whole name, and of all his perfections, as the security for the fulfilment of his engagements to Abraham. The promise he had before given was formed into a covenant; that covenant was signed, sealed, and ratified; and now it was solemnly confirmed with an oath: (xii, xv, xvii). This was intended, not only that Abraham, but that WE, "might have a strong consolation who have fled "for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us" in Christ. (*Heb.* vi. 13—20.) And can any doubt remain about the identity of the covenant, which was made with Abraham, with that which is made with other true believers?—Abraham's obedience evidenced the strength of his faith, and the sincerity of his love: thus "faith

"wrought

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C. R. Ryley del. *Taylor sculp.*

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19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they roſe up, and went together to Beer-ſheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-ſheba.

20 And it came to paſs after theſe things, that it was told Abraham, ſaying, Behold Milcah, ſhe hath alſo borne children unto thy brother Nahor;

21 Huz his firſt-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,

22 And Cheſed, and Hazo, and Pildaſh, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: theſe eight Milcah did bear to Nahor Abraham's brother.

24 And his concubine, whoſe name *was* Reumah, ſhe bare alſo Tebah, and Geham, and Thahaſh, and Maachah.

CHAP.

"wrought with his works, and by works was his faith "made perfect." (*James* ii. 21—23.) As a ſinner he was juſtified before God by faith alone; as a profeſſed believer he was juſtified before the whole world, by the works which his faith produced.

V. 20—24.] This is introduced here as prefatory to the account, which we ſhall ſhortly notice of Iſaac's marriage with Rebekah.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we remain in this world, we muſt never expect to be exempt from trials, and frequently the ſharpeſt come laſt: we ſhould therefore put on, and keep on, the whole armour of God, that ſtanding prepared and watching, when ſummoned to the conflict, we may anſwer, "Here I am." —Where God beſtows much grace, he will be ſure greatly to try it; and though the conflict be painful at the preſent, yet the event ſhall be glorious and joyful. Conſcious of our weakneſs, we ought not to ruſh uncalled into difficult ſervices, and ſhould pray not to be led into temptations: yet if we be upright and watchful, we may be confident that the Lord will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able; nay, we may count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations; firmly believing that "the trial "of our faith ſhall be to praiſe, and honour, and glory, "at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt."—If there be any earthly object which ſeems to rival God in our affections, we may expect that he will in that particular try the ſincerity and ſupremacy of our love; and by chearfully parting with even our beloved Iſaacs for the Lord's ſake, we moſt undeniably prove that we have given him our hearts. —They, who would perform unreſerved obedience, (when they are ſatisfied what the will of God is,) muſt neither be influenced by carnal affections, liſten to plauſible objections, conſult partial counſellors, make needleſs delays, nor leave an opening to interruption and diſturbance; but committing all into the Lord's hand, muſt ſimply follow his direction, and leave all conſequences with him: and they need not doubt, but in the trying moment he will appear for their comfort or relief.—What a wonderful ſight is this, which we now behold! the long-expected ſeed, the ſon of joy, the child of promiſe, the well-beloved, the only beloved Iſaac, now grown up to maturity, and entwining every day more cloſely round the tender affections of his parents; of which he was juſtly deſerving; nay, the church's hope, and the declared progenitor of him "in whom all the families of the earth are bleſſed;" laid upon the altar, bound and mildly expecting the fatal blow from the hand of his moſt loving father; who, with collected firmneſs and intrepid reſolution, takes the knife to ſhed his blood; prepared immediately to kindle that fire which was to conſume him to aſhes!—For this ſingular conduct, Abraham could render no reaſon, but God's expreſs command: nor was there any other principle of of his obedience to that extraordinary command, (an obedience never equalled by mere man,) but *faith*, an unſhaken belief of the Lord's teſtimony, and a firm expectation of the accompliſhment of his promiſes; with a full confidence in his wiſdom, power, and love to perform them. Though the command ſeemed to run counter to thoſe promiſes, he knew it only *ſeemed* to do ſo: obedience was his part, the Lord would take care of the honour of his own faithfulneſs. He had received Iſaac from God, who had a right to diſpoſe of him: honour and comfort were in this path, and, though untried before, with undaunted confidence he walked in it.—Hear this, ye inattentive objectors, who traduce the doctrine of ſalvation by faith as inimical to practical godlineſs; go, and upon your principles equal and exceed this obedience of faith: till then be dumb, or allow, that though you underſtand it not, this apparently weak principle produces effects beyond compariſon prodigious. But hear this likewiſe, ye abuſers of this moſt holy faith, whoſe conduct merits ſtill deeper indignation; who ſay you have faith, yet live in, ſpare, and cleave to, your ſins, renounce not the world, deny not yourſelves, refuſe the croſs, are lovers of yourſelves and of pleaſure more than lovers of God; and inſtead of parting with a deſervedly beloved Iſaac at God's command, like Judas kiſs Chriſt, and ſell him to his enemies for a few pieces of ſilver, or ſome vile ſenſual gratification. Come hither then, compare your faith with Abraham's, and acknowledge that ye are no genuine ſons of this father of the faithful; but that your faith is dead, your hope preſumptuous, and that Abraham diſowns and is aſhamed of you.—In plain language, nothing but faith will carry a man through with his obedience in every poſſible trial; and that is no true faith, which perſeveres in refuſing to obey a plain command in any caſe whatever. "You are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command "you,"—In proportion as faith ſtands this teſt, when ſharply and repeatedly tried, we may be aſſured that we are Abraham's children, intereſted in his covenant, and in the oath by which it was confirmed, and have a right to that ſtrong conſolation, which by it God wills and intends for his people.

But

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st. Sarah's age and death, and Abraham's mourning for her, 1, 2. *2d. The conference and agreement betwixt Abraham and the sons of Heth, about the purchase of a burying-place,* 3—18. *3d. Sarah's burial,* 19, 20.

AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

2 And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

4 I *am* a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

6 Hear us, my lord: thou *art* a mighty prince amongst us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.

8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar:

That

But in this wonderful transaction, faith discerns one infinitely more stupendous! What was the love of Abraham, or of Isaac, to the Lord, compared with the love of God the Father in giving his only begotten Son? and of that only begotten Son in giving himself a sacrifice upon the cross for the sins of men? God commanded Abraham previously to his yielding up his son; but the sacrifice of Christ even prevented our solicitation: the Lord had an undoubted right to demand that life which he had given; but where shall we sinners, deserving of eternal misery, ground our claim to such a gift, as that of Christ to be the propitiation for our sins? The Lord had been a most liberal friend to Abraham, before his willingness to offer Isaac as a burnt-offering; but "God commended his love "to us, in that when we were yet sinners Christ died for "us;" and in that, "when we were enemies, we were re-"conciled to God by the death of his Son." Isaac was a sinner born to die: but the Son of God *assumed human nature* for the very purpose of suffering death for us; and in human nature being free from sin, he was under no obligation to suffer death, but the bond of his love to us. If Isaac was justly beloved of Abraham; Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father, in whom he was well pleased. Had Isaac died, it had been with inward peace, without extraordinary pain, and with singular reputation: but Christ tasted death in all its bitterness, died by violence, surrounded with contempt and insult, treated with indignity and cruelty, and loaded with the weight of our iniquities; whilst "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to "put him to grief, and make his very soul a sacrifice for "sin."—By this we know the loving-kindness of God our Saviour towards sinful man, in that he hath not withheld his Son, his only Son from us: by this we perceive the love of Christ in that he gave himself a sacrifice for our sins.—Behold he dies! yet rises! lives, ascends, and intercedes for us! and calls to sinners to come to him, and partake of his blood-bought salvation: let sinners be warned to hear his voice, and encouraged to trust in him. He calls to his redeemed people to rejoice in him, and glorify him: what then shall we render for all his benefits? Let this "love constrain us to live no longer to ourselves, "but to him who died for us and rose again;" and admiring and adoring his grace, let us devote our all to his service, who laid down his life for our salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *Kirjath-arba*, &c.] It seems that Abraham had some time before the death of Sarah quitted Beer-sheba, and came to sojourn at Hebron. When she died, he come to her tent, to express his unfeigned sorrow, and pay her the last tribute of affection.

V. 3, 4.] The sons of Heth are called elsewhere Hittites, or Hethites. Abraham was *a stranger and a sojourner*; one, who had no fixed settlement among them, and attempted not to acquire any.—The word *give*, does not always express *bestowing gratuitously*: but in this and some other places we are led by the context to interpret it of a grant made for a valuable consideration.—It has generally been the custom, in the church of God, to *inter* the dead; (though burning has been much in use among others:) and indeed it more aptly expresses an acquiescence in that sentence, "Until thou return unto the ground, from "whence thou wast taken."

V. 6. *A mighty prince*, &c.] According to the custom of those times, Abraham's retinue, wealth, and prosperity, would rank him amongst the other surrounding princes: so that now the promise began to be fulfilled, "I will "make thy name great."

V. 7. *Bowed himself*, &c.] Abraham rendered civil honour and respect to the sons of Heth, according to the custom of that age and country. It is evidently no part of the religion of the Bible to refuse these expressions of regard; but an ornament to godliness to render them, as far as it can be done, without flattering the persons, or countenancing the crimes, of others.

V. 9.

9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place among you.

10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that went in at the gates of his city, saying,

11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.

17 And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure

18 Unto Abraham, for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre: the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan.

20 And the field, and the cave that *is* therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth.

CHAP.

V. 9. *Cave*, &c.] Abraham would have a *separate* burying-place; perhaps intimating, that though the righteous live intermingled with the ungodly in this world, there will be a separation after death.

V. 18. *Possession*, &c.] Thus Abraham had an earnest of Canaan, a pledge of his reversionary inheritance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The longest life must shortly close; and the survivors among relations only live to experience the greater number of painful separations.—The more valued any earthly enjoyment is, the greater must be our reluctance to part with it, and our anxiety about it; and the sharper the anguish when that event actually takes place: and when those, who have lived together in conjugal harmony and affection for many years, are parted by death, the separation bears some resemblance to the dissolution of soul and body.—Thus the entrance of sin, and the sentence of death, have filled all below with vanity and vexation.—Blessed be God, that there is a world, where sin, death, vanity, and vexation gain no admission; that there are relations formed which even death cannot part; and that sinners are invited to enter into this indissoluble union, and intimate relation with the everlasting God, by faith in his only begotten Son.—"He that is joined to the Lord is one "spirit;" and no separation can injure or need terrify him, who can never feel that separation from God which is the second death.—Shortly *they*, whom we most love, yea, our very bodies which we so inordinately care for, will become so deformed, that they must be buried out of sight.—how vain then to boast of vigour and comeliness! how mean to pamper and decorate these vile bodies! and how loose should we be to all earthly attachments! Let us rather seek to have our souls adorned with heavenly graces; then shall they flourish in immortal beauty; and the very body shall rise incorruptible and glorious, meet for the eternal enjoyment of God in the blessed society of the angelic hosts.—As we are strangers and sojourners here below, are seeking a heavenly city, and shall shortly want nothing but a burying-place; being speedily to follow those who go before us to the grave: let us mourn departed friends with submission and in hope, and not suffer indulged affections to interfere with present duty; let us avoid every appearance of selfishness, and not be outdone by the people of this world in generosity; let us manage our concerns with punctuality and precision, in order to avoid contention; and so stand prepared and waiting for the coming of our Lord.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Abraham, now grown old, commissioning a servant to go and take a wife for Isaac, 1—9. 2d. The servant's journey, and his arrival at the city of Nahor and the house of Laban, 10—33. 3d. His proposals of a marriage betwixt Isaac and Rebekah, made and acceded to, 34—58. 4th. Rebekah's journey and marriage with Isaac, 59—67.

AND Abraham was old *and* well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell.

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 The LORD God of heaven which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *Abraham*, &c.] These events took place three years after Sarah's death, when Isaac was forty years of age, and Abraham an hundred and forty. Though a numerous posterity was so eminent a part of the promised blessing, no great haste was made about Isaac's marriage; and much less afterwards about that of Jacob. "The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things," notwithstanding his trials, and even by means of them.

V. 2—9.] Probably the servant, entrusted on this occasion, was Eliezer of Damascus, the steward of Abraham's house, a man eminent for wisdom and piety. (xv. 2.)—*Lifting up the hand to the Lord* was before mentioned by Abraham, as his form of taking an oath, or solemn vow. *Putting the hand under the thigh*, might be used to express submissive duty and fidelity. (xiv. 22. xlvii. 29.) The servant was required to swear, that he would use his influence diligently to prevent Isaac from marrying a wife of the Canaanites, who were then generally idolaters, and not proper persons with whom to form so intimate a connection; and to procure him one of Abraham's kindred, among whom the worship of God was still maintained. Before he engaged for these things, the servant put the case, that when a proper person should be found, she might not consent to leave home, and become a stranger in Canaan: and he enquired whether Isaac should then go to live in Mesopotamia? But the sojourning of the Patriarchs in Canaan was a representation of the state of believers in this world; and Isaac's returning and settling in that country, from which Abraham at God's command had come, would have counteracted the original call, and been an emblem of a professor's apostacy. Abraham, therefore, declared his assurance that God by his powerful influence upon the human heart, and by his providential interposition, would remove all hindrances, and prosper the undertaking; for "he would send his angel before him for this purpose."—We may here make some remarks about good angels, as we formerly did about evil spirits, or fallen angels. (Note, *Gen.* iii. 1.) It appears from Scripture that the holy angels were created by God, complete in derived and dependent excellency: that they are very numerous, and of different ranks and orders, angels, archangels, principalities, and powers: that they still retain, and are now confirmed in, the image and favour of God, in holiness and felicity; and that they excel in wisdom, knowledge, and strength; are as a flame of fire with fervent love, gratitude, and active zeal; yet proportionably influenced by deep humility, and reverential awe of the majesty of heaven. They are represented as standing in the presence of the Lord, waiting his commands; covering their faces with their wings, or prostrate in profound adoration, hearkening to his voice, doing his will, and fulfilling his pleasure. They are on this account called *angels* or *messengers*: for though he needs them not, puts no trust in them, and even, in comparison with his own infinite wisdom, charges them with folly; yet he is pleased to honour, and (if we may so speak) to indulge them with his commands, which they execute with unwearied alacrity; and when he appoints and approves, the meanest or the most important services are alike delightful to them. They are the ministers of his providence, and are often introduced as executing his awful vengeance; but more generally considered as "sent forth to minister to them "who shall be heirs of salvation." (*Heb.* i. 14.) There is not a bright seraph through all the heavenly train, who would not delight and glory in attending a poor despised Lazarus in an hospital or a dungeon, to ward off the machinations of evil spirits, to procure a calm to his dying moments, and to hail his departing soul to the mansions of

his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then shalt thou be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

10 And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, (for all the goods of his master *were* in his hand:) and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, *even* the time that women go out to draw *water*.

12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; *let the same be* she *that* thou has appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15 And it came to pass before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel *was* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me (I pray thee) drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said I will draw *water* for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels.

28 And

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the blessed: as all are free from pride and envy, all full of love to the Redeemer and redeemed, and all "rejoice, even over one sinner brought to true repentance." Our obligations to them are great: but all the adoration and praise belong to him who works by them; they are our fellow-servants, and have no claim to our worship, but abhor it as sacrilege and idolatry. We may, however, feel a love for them, and rejoice in the thought of being with them, and like them, for ever: and we may well endeavour to copy the example of their humble zeal, their fervent love, their solemn worship and chearful services; and in our conduct to each other, take pattern from them, by condescending to the meanest and the vilest, without envying, disdaining, or overlooking one another. For the lowest and worst of human creatures is not so mean and vile, compared with the greatest and the best of men, as the greatest and best of men is mean and vile compared even with a created angel.

V. 10. *Ten camels.*] With all other suitable attendents for such a journey, on such an occasion. (32.)

V. 14. *Let it come,* &c.] Great humility and caution are requisite in imitating such examples as this; if they are at all to be imitated, now the written word is our complete and universal rule. We cannot, however, too entirely depend upon God to direct and prosper us in all our undertakings; and we must not pretend to limit the Lord, who may at some times so impress the minds of his servants in perplexity, as to lead them to expect extraordinary interpositions, and then evidently to answer these expectations. We should not, therefore, universally condemn such things, provided they induce nothing in the conduct contrary to the plain rule of duty; nor in the creed contrary to the rule of faith; do not take off men's attention from the written word, or ordinary means of instruction; and are not substituted as the foundation of hope, instead of the promises of God, and the work of his Spirit upon the heart. —It is further observable that Abraham's servant had in mind, in this address, the *idea* of a wife for Isaac; as one that united in her character simplicity, industry, humility, affability, and chearfulness in being serviceable and hospitable; and whatever may be the maxims and fashions of a luxurious and dissipated age; these, in the judgment of common sense, as well as piety, are the best qualifications for one, who is called to support the honourable and important characters of a wife and mother; to be the companion of a man's retired hours; and to be intrusted with the management of his domestic concerns, and with forming the tender minds of his children.

V. 21.

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous, or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring, of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten *shekels* weight of gold;

23 And said, Whose daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I *being* in the way the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

28 And the damsel ran, and told *them of* her mother's house of these things.

29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

30 And it came to pass when he saw the ear-ring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man, and behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

32 And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that *were* with him.

33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

34 And he said, I *am* Abraham's servant.

35 And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels and asses.

36 And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37 And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

38 But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

39 And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40 And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house.

41 Then shalt thou be clear from *this* my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee *one*, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

42 And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go,

43 Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw *water*, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

44 And she say unto me, Both drink thou, and

V. 21. *Held his peace*, &c.] Abraham's servant had attendents, who might have spared Rebekah the labour; but he interposed not, that he might observe her conduct, and wait the answer to his prayer.

V. 22. *Shekel.*] A shekel is about half an ounce.

V. 29. *And*, &c.] It is probable that Bethuel the father of Rebekah was dead, and that the Bethuel afterwards mentioned was Laban's younger brother (50—55.)

V. 36. *And Sarah*, &c.] We find that Abraham had received intelligence concerning the family of Nahor; and we may suppose they had also heard of him, but now the report was authenticated, and the particulars ascertained (xxii. 20—24.)

V.

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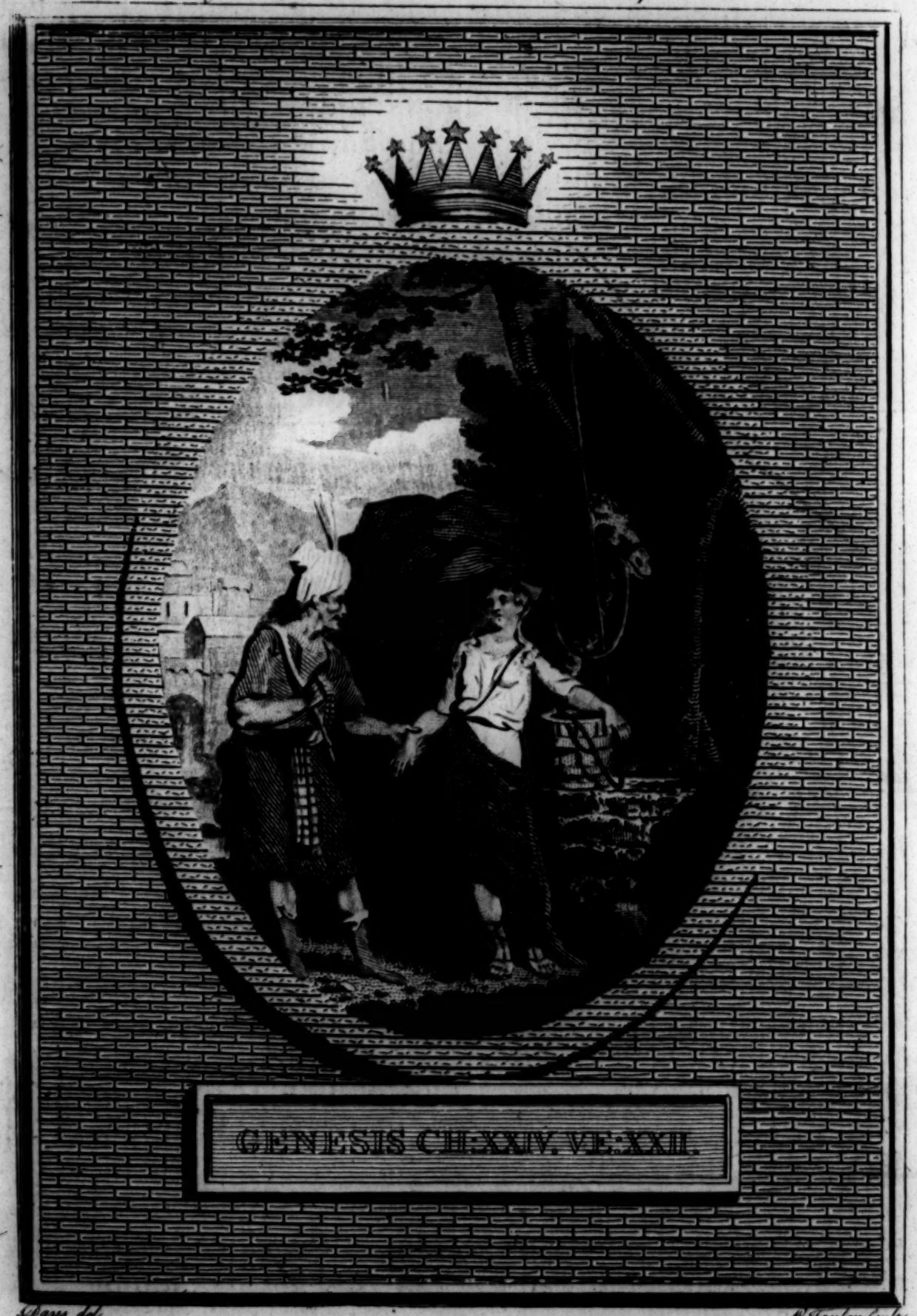

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and I will alſo draw for thy camels: *let* the ſame *be* the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my maſter's ſon.

45 And before I had done ſpeaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her ſhoulder; and ſhe went down unto the well, and drew *water:* and I ſaid unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

46 And ſhe made haſte, and let down her pitcher from her *ſhoulder*, and ſaid, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink alſo: ſo I drank, and ſhe made the camels drink alſo.

47 And I aſked her, and ſaid, Whoſe daughter *art* thou? And ſhe ſaid, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's ſon, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48 And I bowed down my head, and worſhipped the LORD, and bleſſed the LORD God of my maſter Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my maſter's brother's daughter unto his ſon.

49 And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my maſter, tell me: and if not, tell me: that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

50 Then Laban and Bethuel anſwered and ſaid, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot ſpeak unto thee bad or good.

51 Behold, Rebekah *is* before thee, take *her*, and go, and let her be thy maſter's ſon's wife, as the LORD hath ſpoken.

52 And it came to paſs, that when Abraham's ſervant heard their words, he worſhipped the LORD, *bowing himſelf* to the earth.

53 And the ſervant brought forth jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah: He gave alſo to her brother and to her mother precious things.

54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night: and they roſe up in the morning, and he ſaid, Send me away unto my maſter.

55 And her brother and her mother ſaid, Let the damſel abide with us *a few* days, at the leaſt ten; after that ſhe ſhall go.

56 And he ſaid unto them, Hinder me not, ſeeing the LORD hath proſpered my way: ſend me away, that I may go to my maſter.

57 And they ſaid, We will call the damſel, and enquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Rebekah, and ſaid unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And ſhe ſaid, I will go.

59 And they ſent away Rebekah their ſiſter, and her nurſe, and Abraham's ſervant and his men.

60 And they bleſſed Rebekah, and ſaid unto her, Thou *art* our ſiſter, be thou *the mother* of thouſands of millions, and let thy ſeed poſſeſs the gate of thoſe which hate them.

61 And Rebekah aroſe, and her damſels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the ſervant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 And Iſaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi;

V. 44. *Appointed*, &c.] Thoſe events which to us are the effect of *choice*, *contrivance*, or *chance*, are matters of *appointment* with God: and the perſuaſion of this does not prevent, but rather encourage, the uſe of of all *proper means*; at the ſame time that it confines us to ſuch means, and delivers the mind from uſeleſs anxiety and perturbation about the conſequences.

V. 45. *In mine heart*, &c.] Some things form more proper ſubjects for ſecret than for ſocial prayer: Abraham's ſervant conſidered this matter to be of that kind; and therefore uſed mental prayer, till the ſingularity of the anſwer made it proper that it ſhould be communicated.

V. 50. *The thing*, &c.] The whole tranſaction was ſo evidently according to the appointment, and under the direction, of the Lord, that there was no room for heſitation or objection.

V. 55, 56.] This good and faithful ſervant's deſire of communicating the agreeable intelligence at home no doubt induced him to haſten his departure: but there was likewiſe a typical meaning in this whole affair, in which delays, even ſhort ones, are often fatal. "To-day, if "ye will hear his voice."

V. 58. *I will go*, &c.] The excellency of Rebekah's whole character forbids us to think, that there could be any thing in this anſwer inconſiſtent with true delicacy; though perhaps inconſiſtent with its modern ſtandard, when it ſeems to be refined into a degree of affectation ſubverſive of ſincerity. Doubtleſs ſhe ſaw with peculiar clearneſs, that the whole was the appointment of God; and ſhe would not ſo much as ſeem to ſlight the honour and happineſs of being a progenitor of the promiſed Seed; but, like his immediate parent, ſhe anſwered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me "according to thy word."

V. 62. *Lahai-Roi.*] Where the Lord looked upon Hagar. (xvi. 14.)

Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the ſouth-country.

63 And Iſaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide: and he lifted up his eyes, and ſaw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when ſhe ſaw Iſaac, ſhe lighted off the camel.

65 For ſhe had ſaid unto the ſervant, What man *is* this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the ſervant had ſaid, It *is* my maſter: therefore ſhe took a veil and covered herſelf.

66 And the ſervant told Iſaac all things that he had done.

67 And Iſaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and ſhe became his wife; and he loved her: and Iſaac was comforted after his mother's *death*.

CHAP.

V. 63. *To meditate.*] To reflect on the works and truths of God, and pour out his heart in prayer and praiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The effect of a good example, good inſtructions, and the reverential worſhip of God, in his ordinances and in private families, will generally appear in the piety, faithfulneſs, prudence, and affection of the domeſtics: and to live in ſuch families, or be favoured with ſuch ſervants, is a bleſſing from God, highly to be valued, and thankfully to be acknowledged.—No concern in life is of more importance to ourſelves, to others, and to the church of God, than contracting marriage; which therefore ought always to be undertaken with much circumſpection and prudence, with an eye to the will and appointment of God, and with prayer for his direction and bleſſing.—It is an important part of a parent's duty, with great tenderneſs and affection to direct, counſel, and aſſiſt his children in this buſineſs: young perſons are very happy, who have parents that will, in a proper manner and with ſuitable conſideration, perform this duty; and they are wiſe who avail themſelves of ſuch advantages. But where ſuch parents are not conſulted and regarded, the bleſſing of God cannot be expected; nor when godlineſs is not reckoned the primary, though not the only, requiſite in a companion for life.—They, who ſtay their minds on God, will be kept in peace, and enabled to diſregard the peradventures which trouble others: they wait to know God's appointment, are prepared to be ſatisfied with it, and are aſſured that in due time it will take place, and be correſpondent with his promiſes; they only aim to know and to do their duty, and uſe the means which are appointed or allowed. We ſhould, however, in binding ourſelves by an oath, take care that through inattention we do not enſnare our ſouls.—They, who acknowledge God in all their ways, will find him preſent to direct their paths, and make their way proſperous; and, when the prayer of faith meets with an immediate anſwer, the glory ought as ſpeedily to be rendered to the Lord in ſolemn praiſe and thankſgivings.—How are the times changed, ſince the chief perſons in their ſeveral places of abode, and their ſons and daughters, chearfully performed the moſt laborious ſervices with their own hands! I fear we have got but a poor exchange in our exceſſive refinements, for the ſimplicity, diligence, and uſefulneſs, which characterized the patriarchal times.—Whatever buſineſs we are intruſted with, we ſhould, like this pious ſervant, attend to it in preference to our own indulgence or refreſhment; and when our purpoſe is honourable, and we are waiting to know the Lord's appointment, a plain recital of facts, in which the hand of God appears evident, is more becoming, and frequently more effectual, than all the trappings of oratory, which too often diſguiſe the real truth. The remarkable private experience, which we have of God's mercy and faithfulneſs, ought to be declared among thoſe who fear God, for his glory and their encouragement.—Though the counſel and conſent of parents ſhould be obtained; yet, before marriage be ſolemnized, the mutual and chearful compliance of the contracting parties is alſo requiſite, being eſſential to the comfort and happineſs of that honourable ſtate: and when matters are thus orderly managed, and are begun, continued, and completed in the exerciſe of faith, with the prayer of all parties concerned, the bleſſing of God upon them and their poſterity may reaſonably be expected, and the comfort of one relation will compenſate for the loſs of another.

But will not the moſt ſober judgment allow that in this tranſaction we have a type of Chriſt and his church?—We know who is the Bridegroom, that in perfect harmony with his heavenly Father, having offered himſelf as a ſacrifice for ſin, eſpouſes his church unto himſelf. This he does by the miniſtration of his ſervants the preachers of the goſpel, who by his commiſſion go to find out thoſe who are afar off, that they may preſent them as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt. They repreſent to ſinners his glory, his excellency, his ſuitableneſs and loving-kindneſs, their own experience of his grace, and his unſearchable riches, (for all things that the Father hath are his,) to induce their willingneſs: by theſe repreſentations, the drawings of his Spirit, and ſome foretaſtes of his goodneſs, they are prevailed upon to conſent to their own happineſs, and made willing to forſake their own country, and to renounce all for him. Then he adorns them with the robe of his righteouſneſs and the graces of his Spirit, endows them with all his riches, ennobles them by their relation to him, and makes them happy in his love, and his fellowſhip with them. They are now ſupremely attached to his perſon and intereſt, and faithful to their engagements to him; they give him their heart, and devote body and ſoul to his ſervice in ſincerity and ſimplicity. He greatly delights in the beauty which he hath put upon them;

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1ſt. Abraham's marriage to Keturah, and offſpring by her, 1—6. *2d. His age, death, and burial,* 7—10. *3d. The bleſſing of God upon Iſaac; and the poſterity and death of Iſhmael,* 11—18. *4th. Circumſtances attending on the birth of Eſau and Jacob, their different characters and purſuits, and Eſau's ſelling his birthright,* 19—34.

THEN again Abraham took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah.

2 And ſhe bare him Zimram, and Jokſhan, and Medan, and Midian, and Iſhbak, and Shuah.

3 And Jokſhan begat Sheba and Dedan. And the ſons of Dedan were Aſhurim, and Letuſhim, and Leummim.

4 And the ſons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All theſe *were* the children of Keturah.

5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Iſaac.

6 But unto the ſons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and ſent them away from Iſaac his ſon, (while he yet lived,) eaſtward unto the eaſt-country.

7 And theſe *are* the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threeſcore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghoſt, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full *of years;* and was gathered to his people.

9 And his ſons, Iſaac and Iſhmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the ſon of Zohar the Hittite, which *is* before Mamre;

10 The field which Abraham purchaſed of the ſons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

11 And

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them; being thus united to him, they bring forth fruit unto God; and at length he will waſh away every ſpot and blemiſh, and preſent them, (adorned as a bride for her huſband), faultleſs before his preſence with exceeding glory.—In this view, how punctual, laborious, faithful, ſelf-denied, diſintereſted, fervent in prayer, watchful of providence, jealous for Chriſt, and affectionately deſirous of ſouls, ought all to be, who ſuſtain the ſacred miniſterial character! The good Lord ſend forth many ſuch labourers and ſtewards, and make them wiſe to win ſouls!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1—4.] Abraham was 137 years of age when Sarah died; and, nearly 40 years before that event his age had been conſidered as a very powerful obſtruction to his having children: yet he had ſix ſons by Keturah, whom he ſent away in his life-time. On theſe grounds therefore ſome have conjectured that he had married this wife long before.—But the language of the original text, "And Abraham added, and took "a wife," as well as the unnatural diſturbance which this ſuppoſition occaſions in the ſimple narration, militates againſt ſuch an opinion. The Lord had promiſed him an innumerable poſterity, and the long delay both ſerved to try his faith, and to illuſtrate the divine power and faithfulneſs; when at length, beyond all probability, the promiſe was ſo remarkably fulfilled. And as Abraham lived 38 years after Sarah's death, all theſe children might be grown up, much older than Iſhmael was when he was ſent away; and might be ſettled in the world before Abraham's death. They were afterwards mingled with the Iſhmaelites, and many great nations at this very day claim Abraham for their progenitor by ſome of theſe branches.

V. 5. *All*, &c.] Abraham gave the bulk of his ſubſtance to Iſaac, as his legitimate heir. Thus he typified the Son of God, whom he hath appointed heir of all things: and he repreſented true believers, who are joint heirs with Chriſt, and to whom with him the Father freely giveth all things.

V. 6. *Concubines*, &c.] The word *concubine* is uſed, not only for one who cohabited with a man that had another wife, as Hagar; but alſo for one who was a lawful wife, though not admitted to the full privilege of that relation in reſpect of rank and poſſeſſions, as Keturah. As Iſhmael was one of theſe ſons, we may infer from this paſſage, that he was not ſent away deſtitute, or finally deſerted by Abraham; as it is ſometimes ſuppoſed from an inattentive peruſal of the hiſtory (xxi.) This tranſaction was an emblem of the bleſſings of common providence, which God beſtows upon thoſe who have no inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt. (*Gal.* iv. 28.)

V. 8. *Gave up*, &c.] This expreſſion is uſed for the death of the wicked, as well as of the righteous; (*Acts* v. 5. 10. xii. 23;) and it implies no more than the departure of the rational and immortal ſoul from the body at death; when it returns to God that gave it, by him to be diſpoſed of according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil. The words *of years* are not in the original; it is merely *full*, that is, ſatisfied of living in this world and ripe for a better.

V. 11.

11 And it came to paſs after the death of Abraham, that God bleſſed his ſon Iſaac: and Iſaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.

12 Now theſe *are* the generations of Iſhmael Abraham's ſon, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham.

13 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Iſhmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firſt-born of Iſhmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibſam,

14 And Miſhma, and Dumah, and Maſſah,

15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphiſh, and Kedemah.

16 Theſe *are* the ſons of Iſhmael, and theſe *are* their names, by their towns, and by their caſtles; twelve princes according to their nations.

17 And theſe *are* the years of the life of Iſhmael, an hundred and thirty and ſeven years: and he gave up the ghoſt and died, and was gathered unto his people.

18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that *is* before Egypt, as thou goeſt towards Aſſyria: *and* he died in the preſence of all his brethren.

19 And theſe *are* the generations of Iſaac, Abraham's ſon: Abraham begat Iſaac.

20 And Iſaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the ſiſter to Laban the Syrian.

21 And Iſaac intreated the LORD for his wife, becauſe ſhe *was* barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children ſtruggled together within her: and ſhe ſaid, If *it be* ſo, why *am* I thus? And ſhe went to enquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD ſaid unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people ſhall be ſeparated from thy bowels: and *the one* people ſhall be ſtronger than *the other* people; and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger.

24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, *there were* twins in her womb.

25 And the firſt came out red, all over like an hairy garment: and they called his name Eſau.

26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Eſau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Iſaac *was* threeſcore years old when ſhe bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Eſau was a cunning

V. 11. *God bleſſed*, &c.] With that ſpecial bleſſing, wherewith his believing father had been bleſſed.

V. 16. *Theſe are*, &c.] The Iſhmaelites were ſettled in towns and caſtles, before the deſcendents of Iſaac were delivered out of Egypt.

V. 21. *She was barren*, &c.] The faith of Iſaac and Rebekah was in this reſpect tried for twenty years; as Abraham's and Sarah's had been for a longer time.

V. 22, 23.] The children ſtruggled in ſo remarkable a manner, that Rebekah was convinced there was ſomewhat ſupernatural in it; and ſhe ſaid, "If ſo, why "thus?" there is ſome reaſon for this unuſual ſtruggling, which muſt be enquired into. Some ſuppoſe ſhe went to enquire of Shem; (but according to the common chronology, he had been dead ten years;) others conjecture ſhe applied to Heber, who was ſtill living, or to Melchizedek; and others, that ſhe ſtated her caſe to Abraham, that ſhe might from him, as the prophet of the Lord, diſcover his mind in this matter. I mention this as a ſpecimen of conjectural criticiſm in things concerning which we never can acquire information, and in which it would be perfectly uſeleſs if we could. In ſome proper way, known to her and not to us, ſhe enquired, and received for anſwer, that two nations, and two manner of people, were in her womb; namely, the Iſraelites, and the Edomites, or Idumeans, being then in their common parents, Jacob and Eſau. They were men of very oppoſite diſpoſitions; and their deſcendents were as diſſimilar: they perſonally ſtruggled hard for the pre-eminence; and ſo did their poſterity for many ages. In the days of David, the deſcendents of Eſau, the elder brother, were generally ſubject to thoſe of Jacob, the younger, and more entirely in the latter times of the Jewiſh ſtate.—In theſe ſtrugglings, there was an evident alluſion to the conflict between corrupt nature and grace, in the believer's experience, in which the younger acquires the aſcendency: and to the conflict between the world and the true church of God, the ſeed of the ſerpent and the Seed of the woman; in which the church, which is the younger, after many ſtrugglings, will gain a final maſtery.

V. 26. *Took hold*, &c.] As ſtruggling even then for the primogeniture.

V. 27. *A cunning hunter*.] With dexterity and addreſs Eſau

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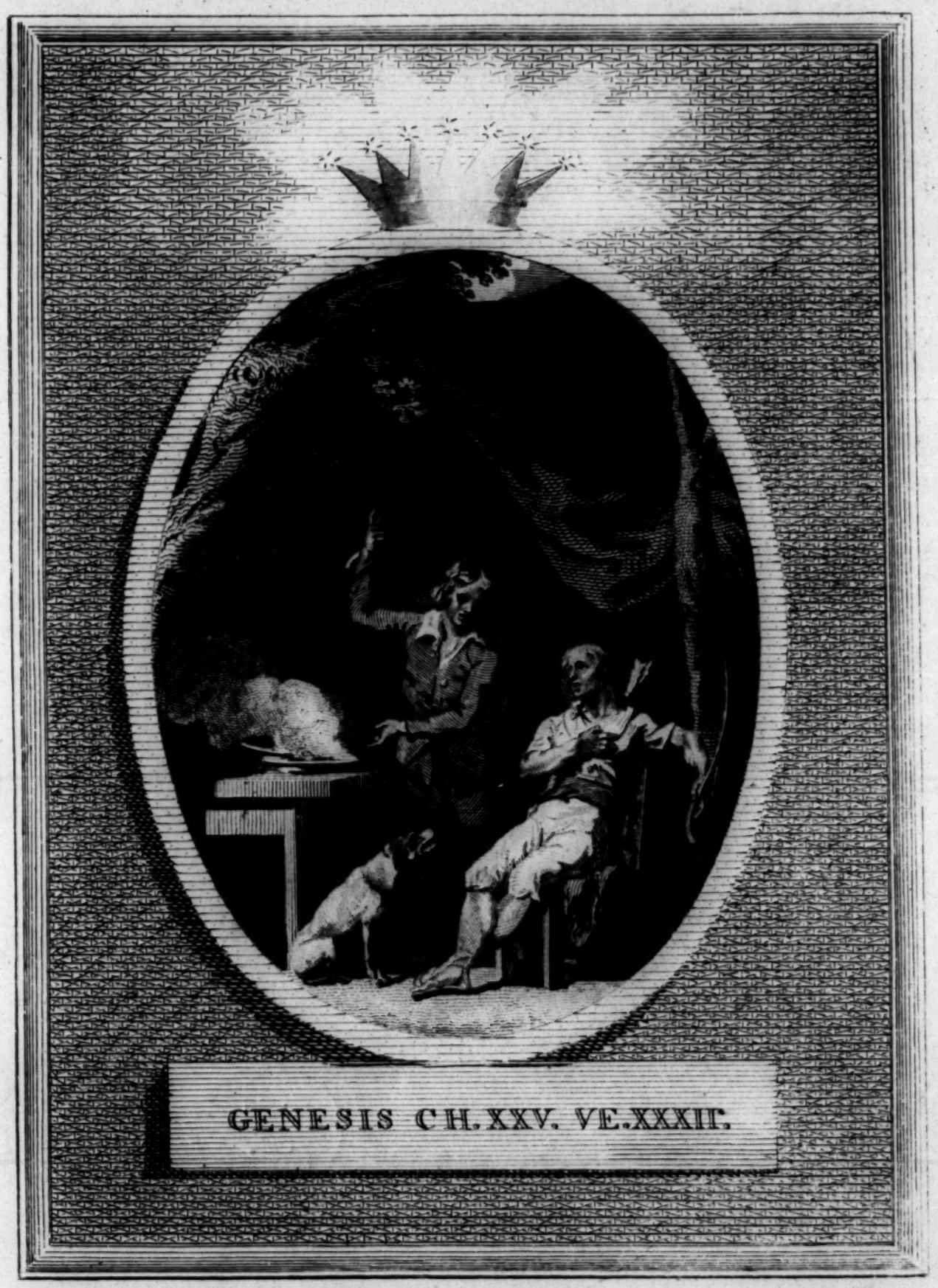

GENESIS CH. XXV. VE. XXXIII.

Dayes del. W. Ellis Sculp.

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cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Iſaac loved Eſau, becauſe he did eat of *his* veniſon: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob ſod pottage: and Eſau came from the field, and he *was* faint.

30 And Eſau ſaid to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that ſame red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob ſaid, Sell me this day thy birth-right.

32 And Eſau ſaid, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit ſhall this birth-right do to me?

33 And Jacob ſaid, Swear to me this day; and he ſware unto him: and he ſold his birth-right unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Eſau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and roſe up, and went his way: thus Eſau deſpiſed *his* birth-right.

Eſau hunted the beaſts of the foreſt; till probably, like Nimrod, he became a warrior, living by his ſword; and eſtabliſhing his authority over his neighbours: accordingly he came to meet his brother with 400 men: (xxvii. 40. xxxii. 6.) But Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents: a downright, honeſt, pious man; a ſtranger and pilgrim in his ſpirit, and a ſhepherd all his days.

V. 30. *Edom.*] That is *red*; nearly the ſame as Adam.

V. 31. *Thy birth-right.*] The temporal inheritance did not deſcend to Jacob, and therefore probably was not meant in this propoſal: but it included the reverſion of the land of Canaan, and the covenant made with Abraham relative to Chriſt, the promiſed Seed. Believing Jacob ſupremely valued theſe bleſſings, but unbelieving Eſau deſpiſed them.

V. 32. *At the point to die.*] It cannot be conceived that Eſau was dying of hunger in Iſaac's houſe, nor would the tranſaction have been ſo *ſeverely* condemned, had it been ſo: but he ſeems to mean, "I ſhall never live to inherit Canaan, or any of theſe future ſuppoſed bleſſings; and what ſignifies it who has them when I am dead and gone?" This was the language of profaneneſs, for which the Apoſtle condemns him; (*Heb.* xii. 16;) and a contempt indeed of the birth-right, which the hiſtorian notes with cenſure. (34.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By repeated examples the Lord teaches us, that though he try faith by long delays, yet he honours it with abundant performances.—"The viſion is for an appointed time, but "at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lie: though it tarry, "wait for it; becauſe it ſhall ſurely come, it will not "tarry:" (*Habak.* ii. 3.) It may be delayed longer than we expected, but not beyond the Lord's appointed time.

A great part of the hiſtory ſtill relates to thoſe who go off, and thoſe who appear on, the ſtage of life. Whether our part on this grand theatre be ſhort or long, it matters but little; provided we perform it in ſuch a manner, as to quit the world with comfort to ourſelves, with benefit to others, and with the approbation of our gracious God: provided we leave behind us a teſtimony from our lips to the faithfulneſs and goodneſs of the Lord; and in the conſciences of others, to the uprightneſs and conſiſtency of our walk before him: with a good example and the bleſſing of God to our families. Having then lived to every good purpoſe, and being ripe for the world above, we may chearfully reſign our ſpirits into the hands of our Redeemer; and leave our bodies to be gathered to our people in the ſilent tomb, in joyful hope of a happy reſurrection. God forbid, that the writer, or any of the readers, of theſe obſervations, ſhould reſt content with earthly bleſſings, which he beſtows on the men of this world; or come ſhort of thoſe ſpecial and eternal bleſſings, which belong to the children of the promiſe! Though the former ſeem to have the pre-eminence here, yet the latter will have their portion, when their's is ſpent and gone for ever. Happy they, who are ſtirred up by the delays of promiſed and expected bleſſings to pray always, and not faint; for every one that aſketh receiveth, though perhaps not immediately.—In all our doubts and perplexities we ſhould enquire of the Lord by prayer, attendance on his ordinances, and attention to his word: and in many of our conflicts and ſtrugglings with ſin and temptations, we may adopt Rebekah's words: "If it be ſo, why am I "thus?" If a child of God, why ſo careleſs or carnal? If not a child of God, why ſo afraid of, or burdened with, ſin?—In the beſt of characters we perceive infirmities, and in the beſt of parents ſinful partialities: but ſurely thoſe are entitled to our ſuperior regard, who are evidently beloved of the Lord!—Men, who are ſlaves to their appetites, and inordinately crave earthly things, to the profane contempt of ſpiritual bleſſings, will, however ſagacious in other reſpects, find themſelves infinitely excelled by thoſe, who chooſe that good part which ſhall never be taken from them. But though we muſt be of Jacob's judgment in preferring the birth-right; yet we ought carefully to avoid all appearance of impoſition in ſeeking to obtain the moſt important advantages.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. A famine. Iſaac going to ſojourn in Gerar, and the Lord's appearance, direction, and promiſes to him, v. 1—5. 2d. His denial of his wife, and his being detected and reproved, v. 6—11. 3d. His proſperity, and the envy and miſchievous malice of the Philiſtines; his removal from and contentions with them, v. 12—22. 4th. The Lord's appearance to him at Beer-ſheba, v. 23, 24, 25. 5th. Abimelech's covenant with Iſaac, v. 26—33. 6th. Eſau's marriage of two wives to the grief of his parents, v. 34, 35.

AND there was a famine in the land, beſides the firſt famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Iſaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philiſtines, unto Gerar.

2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and ſaid, Go not down into Egypt: dwell in the land which I ſhall tell thee of.

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bleſs thee: for unto thee and unto thy ſeed I will give all theſe countries, and I will perform the oath which I ſware unto Abraham thy father.

4 And I will make thy ſeed to multiply as the ſtars of heaven, and will give unto thy ſeed all theſe countries: and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed:

5 Becauſe that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my ſtatutes, and my laws.

6 And Iſaac dwelt in Gerar.

7 And the men of the place aſked *him* of his wife; and he ſaid, She *is* my ſiſter: for he feared to ſay, *She is* my wife; leſt, *ſaid he*, the men of the place ſhould kill me for Rebekah, becauſe ſhe *was* fair to look upon.

8 And it came to paſs when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philiſtines looked out at a window, and ſaw, and behold, Iſaac *was* ſporting with Rebekah his wife.

9 And Abimelech called Iſaac, and ſaid, Behold, of a ſurety, ſhe *is* thy wife: and how ſaidſt thou, She *is* my ſiſter? And Iſaac ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid, Leſt I die for her.

10 And Abimelech ſaid, What *is* this thou haſt done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou ſhouldſt have brought guiltineſs upon us.

11 And Abimelech charged all his people, ſaying, He that toucheth this man or his wife, ſhall ſurely be put to death.

12 Then Iſaac ſowed in that land, and received

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1. *Abimelech*] Abraham's treaty with Abimelech had been before the birth of Iſaac, (xx,) who was ſixty years of age when his ſons were born, and an hundred when Eſau married, (34.) And as Eſau and Jacob are ſpoken of in the cloſe of the former chapter as grown up; this event, which appears to have been ſubſequent, muſt be more than ninety years after the former treaty. It is probable therefore that Abimelech, (which ſignifies *my father the king*,) was the common name of the kings of the Philiſtines; and that this Abimelech was a ſucceſſor to him before mentioned.

V. 2—5.] (xvii.) Abraham had gone down into Egypt, and we may ſuppoſe that Iſaac was deliberating about it; but he was commanded to dwell in one part or other of the land of Canaan, according to ſuch intimations as ſhould from time to time be given him. For the preſent he was directed to ſojourn in the country of the Philiſtines; and the Lord promiſed to manifeſt his preſence with him by his ſpecial care of him in providence, and by comforting him in the exerciſes of religious worſhip. Becauſe it was fit and meet that God ſhould thus teſtify his ſignal approbation of Abraham's remarkable obedience, for the honour of his own name, and the encouragement of others, eſpecially of Iſaac. This obedience alſo had a tendency to promote the fulfilment of theſe promiſes: (xviii. 18, 19;) it was the proper evidence of that faith, by which, as a ſinner, he was juſtified before God, and the effect of that love by which true faith works: (*Gal.* v. 6.) And it was in conſequence of his prompt obedience, that the covenant was ſealed and ratified to him with an oath.

V. 7. *Aſked him*, &c.] The queſtion began to excite in Iſaac apprehenſions for his ſafety: his anſwer contained a more direct falſhood, than thoſe uſed by Abraham; and his unbelief was more inexcuſable, becauſe he lived in Gerar by God's expreſs command, and under his immediate protection, which had been engaged to him by the preceding viſion.

V. 8. *A long time*, &c.] Without interruption, which ſhewed that Iſaac's ſuſpicions were alſo injurious to the Philiſtines.

ceived in the ſame year an hundred-fold, and the LORD bleſſed him.

13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great.

14 For he had poſſeſſion of flocks, and poſſeſſion of herds, and great ſtore of ſervants. And the Philiſtines envied him.

15 For all the wells which his father's ſervants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philiſtines had ſtopped them, and filled them with earth.

16 And Abimelech ſaid unto Iſaac, Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we.

17 And Iſaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Iſaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philiſtines had ſtopped them, after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And Iſaac's ſervants digged in the valley, and found there a well of ſpringing water.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did ſtrive with Iſaac's herdmen, ſaying, The water *is* ours: and he called the name of the well Eſek, becauſe they ſtrove with him.

21 And they digged another well, and ſtrove for that alſo: And he called the name of it Sitnah.

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they ſtrove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he ſaid, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we ſhall be fruitful in the land.

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-ſheba.

24 And the LORD appeared unto him the ſame night, and ſaid, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bleſs thee, and multiply thy ſeed for my ſervant Abraham's ſake.

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Iſaac's ſervants digged a well.

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

27 And Iſaac ſaid unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, ſeeing ye hate me, and have ſent me away from you?

28 And they ſaid, We ſaw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we ſaid, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, *even* betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have ſent thee away in peace: thou *art* now the bleſſed of the LORD.

30 And he made them a feaſt, and they did eat and drink.

31 And they roſe up betimes in the morning, and ſware one to another: and Iſaac ſent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it came to paſs the ſame day, that Iſaac's ſervants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and ſaid unto him, We have found water.

33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city *is* Beer-ſheba unto this day.

V. 12. *An hundred fold.*] This was very extraordinary increaſe, and an evident effect of the divine bleſſing. I believe that in many parts of this land, with all our improvements in agriculture, an ordinary crop of grain is very ſeldom known to exceed twenty fold; and much more frequently, without any remarkable miſmanagement or diſaſter, to come ſhort of ten fold, clear increaſe upon the ſeed ſown.

V. 17. *Valley of Gerar.*] Upon the borders of Abimelech's kingdom.

V. 20. *Eſek.*] That is, *contention.*

V. 21. *Sitnah.*] That is, *hatred.*

V. 22. *Rehoboth.*] That is *places*, or *room:* the piety of the language here uſed in one of the ordinary concerns of life is worth noting and imitating.

V. 24. *Fear not.*] Be not afraid of their envy, or enmity.

V. 33. *Shebah.*] That is, *an oath. Beer-ſheba* ſignifies, *the well of an oath.*

34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1st. Isaac's old age and infirmity, v. 1, 2. 2d. His sending Esau to hunt for venison, previous to blessing him, v. 3, 4. 3d. Rebekah's stratagem to secure the blessing to Jacob, v. 5—10. 4th. Jacob's objections stated, and over-ruled, v. 11—13. 5th. The execution and success of the stratagem, and the blessing pronounced on Jacob, v. 14—29. 6th. Esau's arrival, Isaac's surprise at the discovery, and Esau's complaint and lamentation, v. 30—36. 7th. A blessing pronounced on Esau, v. 37—40. 8th. Esau's hatred and intended revenge discovered by Rebekah, and her consequent counsel to Jacob, and proposal to Isaac, v. 41—46.

AND it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: And he said unto him, Behold, *here am* I.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Repeated famines in the Land of Promise taught the patriarchs, and uneasiness in the most eligible situations should teach us, to look to the Canaan above, the heavenly inheritance, for unalloyed felicity. Yet they are happy, even on earth, who are guided by Jehovah's counsel, upheld and protected by his power, encouraged by his presence, and assured of an interest in his everlasting love. If he engages to be with us, and we abide where he would have us to be; nothing but our own unbelief and distrust can prevent our comfort. The blessing which descends upon posterity in answer to prayer, as the effect of wholesome instructions, and good example, and as a gracious recompence of the obedience of faith, is unspeakably preferable to any other riches which can be left them.—Though God do not justify a sinner by his works, yet he will most abundantly reward the good works of a true believer; "for our righteous Lord loveth righ-"teousness," and will shew his love of it. But alas! it is much more natural and easy for us to imitate the faults, than the faith and holiness of eminent characters. And too many conclude that they may venture on this or the other conduct, because persons of eminent piety have been betrayed into it: how careful therefore should we be not to sanction transgression, or give force to temptation by our example! There is nothing in this part of Isaac's conduct to be imitated, or even excused: the impartiality of the sacred historian records it for our warning, and to shew that righteousness cometh not by the law, but by the faith of Christ.—Rather let us in this transaction imitate the conduct of Abimelech, his serious rebuke, and his return of good for evil: but how will his abhorrence of adultery rise up in judgment against such a nation as this!—Though the Lord detect, reprove, and even shame his offending servants, yet he still pardons and blesses them. His blessing maketh rich, and the increase of the earth is his gift: but alas! riches generally excite envy, suspicion, and jealousy; and we may very often call our worldly acquisitions, (as Isaac did his wells,) *contention* and *enmity*. The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy, and whilst we watch against its workings in ourselves, and pray to him who giveth more grace, we should avoid whatever may needlessly excite it in others: for when once it is kindled, the malice, rancour, and wanton mischief, which it may occasion, can scarcely be described.—That wisdom which is from above, will teach us rather to recede from our right, and retire from the contentious, than to engage in angry disputes: and if we are injuriously driven from one place, the Lord will make room for us in another, and recompense us with the assurance and consolations of his love. When such a yielding spirit is united with a profession of his truth, and a regard to his worship and service; he will himself plead our cause, make our enemies to be at peace with us, and to court our friendship, acknowledging that the Lord loveth us.—The forgiveness of injuries, and readiness to reconciliation and hospitality, are ornamental to godliness. We must, however, have some cross to counterbalance each comfort: yet children are highly culpable, who are the sinful occasions of grief of heart to their pious and affectionate parents: nor has any thing been more universally the bane of domestic happiness, than unhallowed marriages, and the practice of polygamy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *Isaac was old*, &c.] Joseph was 30 years of age when he stood before Pharaoh, (xli. 46.) After the seven years of plenty, and about the third year of the famine, (that is, when Joseph was about 40) Jacob told Pharaoh that he was 130 years of age. Hence it appears that Jacob was 90 when Joseph was born, which was probably above 14 years after; consequently Jacob was at this time about 75, or 76, and Isaac 135, or 136 years of age.

V. 2. *I know not*, &c.] Isaac lived, though blind, at least 44 years after this. But he deemed it best to settle his domestic concerns, that he might not have incumbrances of that kind to discompose him when the time of death should come: in which he ought to be highly commended.

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver, and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me *ſome* veniſon;

4 And make me ſavoury meat, ſuch as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my ſoul may bleſs thee before I die.

5 And Rebekah heard when Iſaac ſpake to Eſau his ſon: and Eſau went to the field to hunt *for* veniſon, *and* to bring *it*.

6 And Rebekah ſpake unto Jacob her ſon, ſaying, Behold, I heard thy father ſpeak unto Eſau thy brother, ſaying,

7 Bring me veniſon, and make me ſavoury meat, that I may eat, and bleſs thee before the LORD before my death.

8 Now therefore, my ſon, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them ſavoury meat for thy father, ſuch as he loveth.

10 And thou ſhalt bring *it* to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bleſs thee before his death.

11 And Jacob ſaid to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Eſau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a ſmooth man.

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I ſhall ſeem to him as a deceiver; and I ſhall bring a curſe upon me, and not a bleſſing.

13 And his mother ſaid unto him, Upon me *be* thy curſe, my ſon: only obey my voice, and go fetch me *them*.

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made ſavoury meat, ſuch as his father loved.

15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldeſt ſon Eſau, which *were* with her in the houſe, and put them upon Jacob her younger ſon.

16 And ſhe put the ſkins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the ſmooth of his neck.

17 And ſhe gave the ſavoury meat, and the bread which ſhe had prepared, into the hand of her ſon Jacob.

18 And he came unto his father, and ſaid, My father: And he ſaid, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my ſon?

19 And Jacob ſaid unto his father, I *am* Eſau thy firſt-born: I have done according as thou badeſt me: ariſe, I pray thee, ſit and eat of my veniſon, that thy ſoul may bleſs me.

20 And Iſaac ſaid unto his ſon, How *is it* that thou haſt found it ſo quickly, my ſon? And he ſaid, Becauſe the LORD thy God brought it to me.

V. 4. *That I may eat*, &c.] As this was not intended for a public feaſt, but merely for a private ſelf-indulgent meal, one cannot but deem it a carnal introduction to the ſpiritual bleſſing which Iſaac purpoſed to pronounce: a ſolemn ſacrifice would have appeared more conſiſtent with his character and the occaſion. His partiality for Eſau, and the cuſtom of the elder being heir, led him to forget, miſunderſtand, or diſregard the anſwer, which the Lord had formerly given Rebekah on this ſubject, (xxv. 23.)

V. 10. *That he may*, &c.] Rebekah was ſenſible that Iſaac was about to act wrong; for ſhe knew that the bleſſing was intended for Jacob, and expected that he would have it. But it behoved her, either calmly to have argued the matter, and expoſtulated with Iſaac; or, if that appeared inexpedient and unavailing, to have committed the matter to the Lord by prayer, and remained quiet; and by no means ought ſhe to have uſed ſuch artifice as this. She did not indeed wrong Eſau, in regard to the birthright; as both the Lord's purpoſe, and his own agreement ratified with an oath, deprived him of all claim to it: but ſhe injured Iſaac, by practiſing ſuch an impoſition upon him; and Jacob, by uſing her authority and perſuaſions to tempt him to wickedneſs; ſhe was guilty of much ſin againſt the Lord, and diſhonoured his power and faithfulneſs, by ſuppoſing he needed ſuch means of effecting his purpoſe, and fulfilling his promiſe. Nay, ſhe even threw a ſtumbling block in Eſau's way, and furniſhed him with a plauſible pretext for his enmity, not only to Jacob but to religion, by putting Jacob on acting ſo treacherous a part.

V. 13. *Upon me be thy curſe*, &c.] Though Rebekah had a well-grounded confidence that Jacob would obtain the bleſſing; yet employing that confidence to induce Jacob to commit evident ſin, too much reſembled the conduct of ſuch perſons as are the more bold in wickedneſs, becauſe God is rich in mercy.

V. 14. *And he went*, &c.] Jacob could not indeed defeat the purpoſe of God, by his miſconduct; but he contracted much guilt, for which he afterwards ſeverely ſmarted.

V. 20. *Becauſe the Lord*, &c.] This was a dreadful profanation of the Lord's name, by which he made religion the cloke of his diſſimulation.

21 And Iſaac ſaid unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my ſon, whether thou *be* my very ſon Eſau, or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Iſaac his father, and he felt him; and ſaid, the voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Eſau.

23 And he diſcerned him not, becauſe his hands were hairy, as his brother Eſau's hands: So he bleſſed him.

24 And he ſaid, *Art* thou my very ſon Eſau? And he ſaid, I *am*.

25 And he ſaid, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my ſon's veniſon, that my ſoul may bleſs thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Iſaac ſaid unto him, Come near now, and kiſs me, my ſon.

27 And he came near, and kiſſed him: and he ſmelled the ſmell of his raiment, and bleſſed him, and ſaid, See, the ſmell of my ſon *is* as the ſmell of a field, which the LORD hath bleſſed.

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatneſs of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

29 Let people ſerve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's ſons bow down to thee: Curſed *be* every one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed *be* he that bleſſeth thee.

30 And it came to paſs, as ſoon as Iſaac had made an end of bleſſing Jacob, and Jacob was yet ſcarce gone out from the preſence of Iſaac his father, that Eſau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he alſo had made ſavoury meat, and brought it unto his father; and ſaid unto his father, Let my father ariſe, and eat of his ſon's veniſon, that thy ſoul may bleſs me.

32 And Iſaac his father ſaid unto him, Who *art* thou? And he ſaid, I *am* thy ſon, thy firſt-born Eſau.

33 And Iſaac trembled very exceedingly, and ſaid, Who, where *is* he that hath taken veniſon, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou cameſt, and have bleſſed him? yea, *and* he ſhall be bleſſed.

34 And when Eſau heard the words of his

V. 21. *And Iſaac*, &c.] Though Iſaac probably would have been glad to have heard Eſau uſe ſuch language, yet it ſeems to have excited ſome ſuſpicions in his mind.

V. 22. *The voice is Jacob's*, &c.] As Iſaac's eyes failed him, he ſeems to have diſtruſted his ears alſo.—How wonderful is that difference, which there is betwixt the faces and the voices of the ſeveral individuals of the human ſpecies! ſcarcely any two of the innumerable millions are exactly alike in either! and yet the difference cannot be defined or deſcribed. The power, wiſdom, and kindneſs of our Creator, ſhould be admired and adored in this remarkable circumſtance; for they are very viſible!—This deſcription of Jacob is not unaptly accommodated to the character of a hypocrite; his voice, his language, is that of a chriſtian; his hands, or conduct, that of an ungodly man: but the judgment will proceed, as in the preſent caſe, not by the voice but by the hands.

V. 27—29.] Though we muſt acknowledge the hand of God in this tranſaction, and conſider this bleſſing as a prophecy, which was accordingly fulfilled in the hiſtory of the two nations deſcended from Jacob and Eſau; yet, in making the prophet the Lord does not deprive a man of his faculties, or abſolve him from his accountableneſs; and we may enquire why there is no explicit mention made here, as elſewhere, of the promiſed Seed, and of the promiſed land? Perhaps Iſaac was conſcious that theſe belonged to Jacob, and confined his interpretation of Rebekah's information to thoſe particulars:—or he deemed that matter determined by the ſale of the birth-right: or perhaps he knew that Eſau did not ſet much value on the ſpiritual meaning of the bleſſing, and therefore he couched it in general terms. However, though Iſaac ſeems to ſpeak with heſitation, yet the bleſſings were doubtleſs implied in the words here uſed; (xxviii. 3, 4.) But by the appointment of God he was led to ſpeak in ſuch language, as, contrary to his own inclination, expreſsly conferred the dominion, and the whole bleſſing of Abraham upon Jacob.

V. 33. *Trembled*, &c.] Iſaac was ſeized with conſternation by the various circumſtances, which now ruſhed into his mind, evincing that he had been raſhly attempting to counteract the appointment of God: the language of the whole verſe very emphatically expreſſes the confuſion of his mind, at perceiving in what manner God had fruſtrated his intention: but at the cloſe, he acquieſced in what was done, as manifeſtly the will of God.

V. 34. *Exceeding bitter cry*, &c.] Eſau was exceedingly grieved to be thus circumvented and diſappointed; and to find that the providence of God had ratified his former fooliſh bargain. Perhaps he dreaded ſome immediate temporal calamity in conſequence: yet it is plain that he had no proper value for the ſpiritual bleſſings of the covenant, made with Abraham and Iſaac, which were thus transferred to Jacob.

father,

GENESIS CH. XXVII. VE. XXI.

Corbould del. Page sculp.

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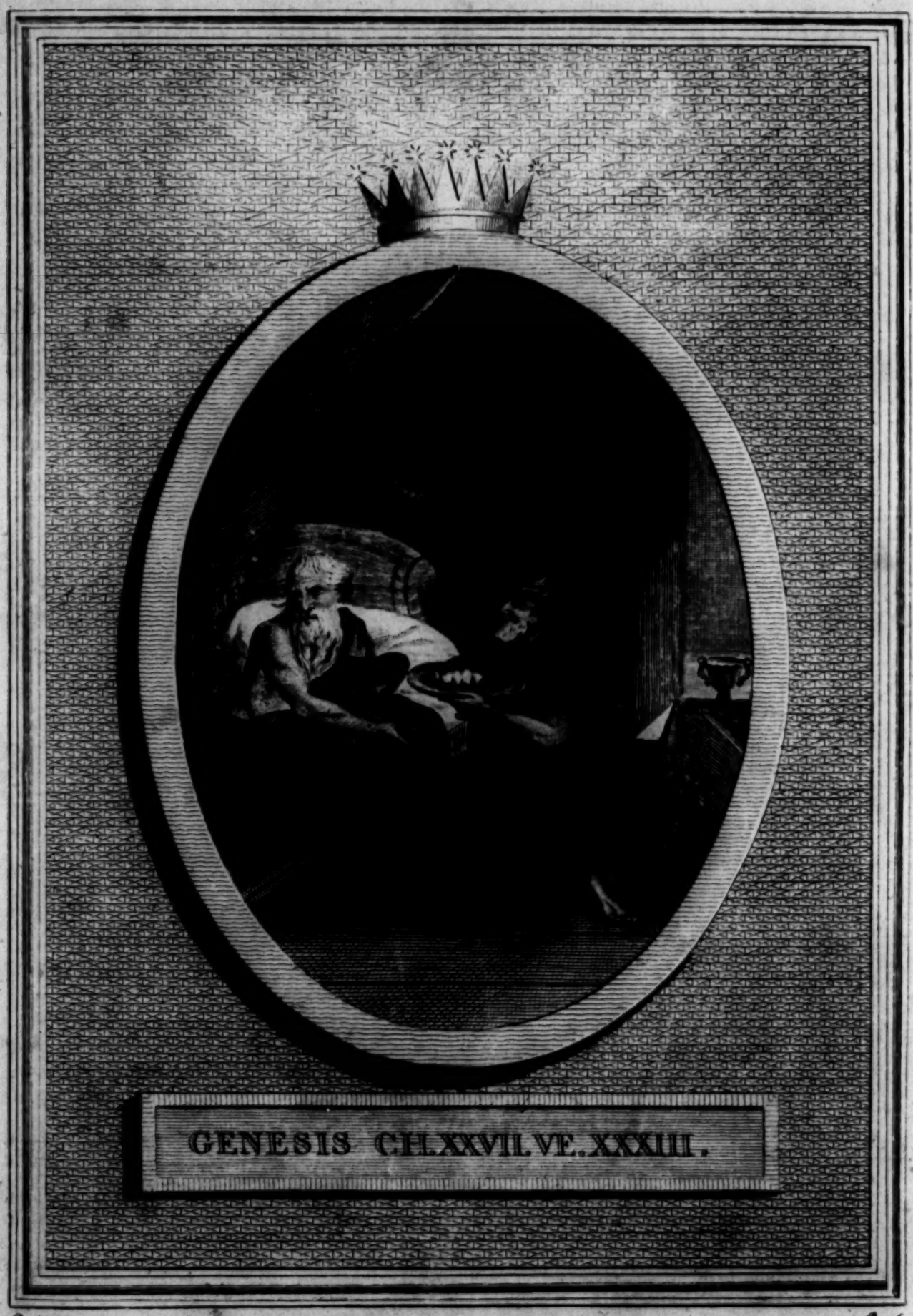

GENESIS CH.XXVII.VE.XXXIII.

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father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and ſaid unto his father, Bleſs me, even me alſo, O my father.

35 And he ſaid, Thy brother came with ſubtilty, and hath taken away thy bleſſing.

36 And he ſaid, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath ſupplanted me theſe two times: he took away my birth-right; and behold now he hath taken away my bleſſing. And he ſaid, Haſt thou not reſerved a bleſſing for me?

37 And Iſaac anſwered and ſaid unto Eſau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for ſervants; and with corn and wine have I ſuſtained him: and what ſhall I do now unto thee, my ſon?

38 And Eſau ſaid unto his father, Haſt thou but one bleſſing, my father? bleſs me, *even* me alſo, O my father. And Eſau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39 And Iſaac his father anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thy dwelling ſhall be the fatneſs of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.

40 And by thy ſword ſhalt thou live, and ſhalt ſerve thy brother: and it ſhall come to paſs when thou ſhalt have the dominion, that thou ſhalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

41 And Eſau hated Jacob, becauſe of the bleſſing wherewith his father bleſſed him: and Eſau ſaid in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I ſlay my brother Jacob.

42 And theſe words of Eſau her elder ſon were told to Rebekah: And ſhe ſent and called Jacob her younger ſon, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thy brother Eſau, as touching thee, doth comfort himſelf, *purpoſing* to kill thee.

43 Now therefore, my ſon, obey my voice: and ariſe, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou haſt done to him: then I will ſend and fetch thee from thence. Why ſhould I be deprived alſo of you both in one day?

46 And Rebekah ſaid to Iſaac, I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, ſuch as theſe *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good ſhall my life do me?

V. 36. *He took away*, &c.] Eſau ſpake as if Jacob had taken away the birth-right by force or fraud; being more diſpoſed to blame his brother than himſelf.

V. 38. *But one*, &c.] If Eſau might not have that very bleſſing, which was the bleſſing of Abraham, before limited to Iſaac, and now given to Jacob, which implied and typified the everlaſting bleſſings which believers have in and by Chriſt; he was willing to compound for another bleſſing of a more carnal nature.

V. 39, 40.] This bleſſing was very ſuitable to Eſau's character, and probably would not have been diſagreeable to his inclinations, had it not been for the clauſe, "thou "ſhalt ſerve thy brother." Yet it was intimated that Eſau's poſterity would break his yoke; not ſerve ſubmiſſively, but indignantly; and that at ſome times they would be ſo powerful as to revolt ſucceſsfully. (2 *Kings* viii. 20—22.)

V. 41. *Hated Jacob*, &c.] Though Jacob had given Eſau ſome plauſible pretence for his enmity; yet it *originated* from the ſame ſource, and was of the ſame nature, as the hatred of Cain to Abel: namely, the piety of Jacob's character, and the evident preference which the Lord had manifeſted for him.—Eſau ſeems to have had no regard for Rebekah, whom probably he diſliked for her love to Jacob; and therefore, when Iſaac ſhould be removed, he purpoſed to ſlay his brother, whatever anguiſh his mother might endure.

V. 45. *Both in one day?*] Either by the death of the murderer, by ſome judgment from God, if human juſtice reached him not; or by his becoming ſo vile, as to be only a trouble and a grief of heart unto her.

V. 46. *And Rebekah*, &c.] Not deſiring to render Iſaac's mind more uneaſy, Rebekah mentioned not the principal reaſon of her propoſal; but adduced one, which was perfectly conſiſtent with truth, and which gives us a melancholy idea of Eſau's two wives, and the effect of this part of his conduct upon Iſaac's domeſtic felicity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What is long life, of which we are ſo deſirous, but the ſurviving of our deareſt friends and choiceſt comforts, our capacities of enjoyment, and our very faculties and ſenſes? And what can life then be but labour and ſorrow?—We ſhould indeed be willing to live as long as, either by active ſervice or patient ſuffering, we can glorify God, and ſerve our generation; but we ſhould never poſtpone the neceſſary preparation for death; and if ready, we need not be unwilling to quit this vale of tears, whenever the Lord ſhall call: nor will the conſtant expectation of the uncertain hour of death, or habitual preparation for it, in

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſaac bleſſing and counſelling Jacob, and ſending him to Padan-Aram, v. 1—5. *2d. Eſau's marriage to a third wife, v.* 6—9. *3d. Jacob's journey, lodging, dream, obſervations upon it, and ſubſequent vow, v.* 10—22.

AND Iſaac called Jacob, and bleſſed him, and charged him, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Ariſe, go to Padan-aram, to the houſe of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bleſs thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayeſt be a multitude of people:

4 And give thee the bleſſing of Abraham, to thee and to thy ſeed with thee; that thou mayeſt inherit the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Iſaac ſent away Jacob, and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, ſon of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Eſau's mother.

6 When Eſau ſaw that Iſaac had bleſſed Jacob, and ſent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he bleſſed him, he gave him a charge, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram:

8 And Eſau ſeeing that the daughters of Canaan pleaſed not Iſaac his father:

9 Then went Eſau unto Iſhmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the

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the leaſt haſten its approach.—The ſame impartiality, which influenced the inſpired writer, requires us to note, that we muſt not follow the beſt of men, further than they act in conformity with the law of God; and that we meet with many things in this chapter to cenſure and ſhun: ſuch as, Iſaac's partiality for the profane Eſau, and the unworthy grounds of that preference; his inattention to the divine revelation, and his unintentional attempt to diſannul the Lord's purpoſe: Rebekah's raſh project to deceive Iſaac, and her putting into her ſon Jacob's mouth ſo many falſehoods, and powerfully urging him to venture upon them: and Jacob's undertaking and going through with this fraudulent deſign. Nor can their faith, or deſire of the bleſſing juſtify or excuſe, much leſs ſanctify, ſuch unlawful means; we muſt not do evil that good may come. And though God indeed over-ruled theſe unjuſtifiable actions to the accompliſhment of his purpoſes: yet we may read his judgment of them in the conſequences to all the parties concerned; in Iſaac's trembling and conſternation, and diſcord in his family; the piercing of Rebekah's very ſoul by the report of Eſau's murderous intentions; and her parting with her beloved Jacob, probably never more to meet on earth; Jacob's long exile, and many hardſhips; and long after in his fear, leſt enraged Eſau ſhould deſtroy the mother with the children.—But nothing can diſannul the Lord's purpoſe; his counſel muſt and ſhall be eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding all miſmanagement and oppoſition. We may likewiſe obſerve, that the arts of falſehood are ſoon learned, and one ſin makes way for many; and that a lying lip is but for a moment. Nor can they expect to be treated with candour and truth by others, who do not ſtrictly adhere to veracity themſelves. They, who profanely deſpiſe ſpiritual bleſſings, may one day bewail their folly, with unavailing lamentations: nay, even in this world, there are ſeaſons when the moſt ungodly perceive and envy, though they will not ſeek for, the ſuperior felicity of true believers. Impenitent ſinners blame any body rather than themſelves; and in plenty of worldly good things they ſoon forget the folly and miſery of forfeiting ſpiritual bleſſings. A godly man, when reminded and convinced of the will of God, will ſubmit his inclination to it: though before he were otherwiſe minded. The wicked indeed, being the ſeed of the old ſerpent, implacably and without cauſe hate the righteous: but ſometimes the miſconduct of the righteous furniſhes them with a pretext, and draws forth their enmity into more immediate malice and murder. There is much wickedneſs in the world, but far more in the heart of man, which is reſtrained by fear, natural affection, ſhame, conſcience, or human laws; without which the earth would be a mere Aceldama: for that heart muſt be truly diabolical that can ſeek comfort in a brother's murder. We would commend Rebekah for her prudent care to prevent the fatal effects of her ſon's anger, for her tenderneſs to Iſaac, and for her diſlike to the ill behaviour of Eſau's wives: yet we muſt obſerve, that it is hard to expreſs abhorrence of evil, without ſome mixture of impatience: life may be valuable and uſeful, though the world be wicked and ungrateful.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 2. *To the houſe.*] That is, to the family of Bethuel; for he had been long dead.

V. 9. *Unto Iſhmael.*] Iſhmael alſo had been dead ſome time, but Eſau went to his family. It does not appear whether he would have done right, had he married Iſhmael's daughter firſt and ſingly. We hope ſome regard to Abraham's God remained in Iſhmael's family; yet it did not look well in Eſau to unite himſelf with thoſe who were caſt out from the inheritance by God himſelf: but to marry her, when he had two other wives, was certainly making bad worſe.

daughter

daughter of Iſhmael Abraham's ſon, the ſiſter of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

10 And Jacob went out from Beer-ſheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, becauſe the ſun was ſet: and he took of the ſtones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and laid down in that place to ſleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it.

13 And behold, the LORD ſtood above it, and ſaid, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Iſaac: the land whereon thou lieſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed.

14 And thy ſeed ſhall be as the duſt of the earth: and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the weſt, and to the eaſt, and to the north, and to the ſouth: and in thee and in thy ſeed ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.

15 And behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goeſt, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done *that* which I have ſpoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his ſleep, and he ſaid, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not.

17 And he was afraid, and ſaid, How dreadful *is* this place! this *is* none other but the houſe of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob roſe up early in the morning, and took the ſtone that he had put *for* his pillows, and ſet it up *for* a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place

V. 11. *And*, &c.] We muſt not reſolve the ſolitary journey of Jacob on this occaſion *merely* into the ſimplicity of the times; for *the ſervant* of Abraham, when he took the ſame journey on a ſimilar occaſion, had a ſuitable retinue: and probably Iſaac was more wealthy than his father. We may ſuppoſe that it was concerted by Rebekah, in order that Jacob might ſet out on his journey unobſerved by Eſau, and leſt he ſhould embrace that opportunity of murdering him; and to prevent Eſau's envy and jealouſy being any further excited, as they would have been had Jacob been ſent off with a proportionable attendance; but rather that they might be abated by the conſideration of the hardſhips to which Jacob was expoſed: and that it might appear that he did not, in conſequence of the birth-right and bleſſing, intend to proſecute a claim to the temporal riches of his father. (Note *Gen.* iv. 7.) Jacob, as a plain man, would have no objection to go unattended and obſcure. Yet we cannot conclude from the meanneſs of this night's lodging, that he had not wherewithal to purchaſe a better: but night coming on, there being no public inns, and no hoſpitable perſon at hand; and the climate being mild, having taken ſuch refreſhment as he had with him, and being weary and of a hardy diſpoſition, he ſoon compoſed himſelf to ſleep: though in a ſituation which we ſhould think neither comfortable nor ſecure.

V. 12. *Dreamed*, &c.] This ladder ſeems to have been an emblem of the gracious care, that the God of heaven takes of the inhabitants of the earth, eſpecially of ſuch as fear and truſt in him; which is in great meaſure rendered effectual by the miniſtry of holy angels, executing his mandates and reporting their ſervices: but all this is vouchſafed us only through Jeſus Chriſt. In his perſon, as God manifeſt in the fleſh, the communication betwixt heaven and earth is prepared; through his incarnation, ſacrifice, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and advocacy, a new and living way is opened into the holieſt; by this way ſinners draw near with acceptance for their perſons and ſervices to the throne of grace; and all bleſſings are communicated through him from our reconciled Father to his redeemed people. By faith we perceive this way, and in prayer we approach by it: in anſwer to which we receive all needful bleſſings of providence and grace, by the miniſtrations of angels, and by the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.—He then is the true ladder; and Jacob, as well as Abraham, ſaw his day, and was glad. (*John* i. 51.)

V. 14. *And thy ſeed*, &c.] We ſhould bear in mind that when this promiſe was made, Jacob was above ſeventy years old, and unmarried.

V. 16, 17.] Jacob was not ignorant of God's omnipreſence, nor of his gracious nearneſs to them who fear him. But having left his father's houſe under the rebukes of Providence, probably uneaſy in his conſcience, fleeing from the face of enraged Eſau; and being deprived not only of the ſolace of the company of endeared friends, of whom he had taken a ſorrowful farewel, but of the ordinances of divine worſhip from which he was exiled; and having nothing before him but a long journey to a ſtrange country, his heart probably was diſquieted within him, and he was ready to ſay, "I am baniſhed from the ſight of thine eyes." Little expecting the ordinary comforts of religion, he was ſurpriſed with this extraordinary viſit, and theſe gracious aſſurances: and in a deep ſenſe of his own unworthineſs and of his unbelieving deſpondency, and in a thankful reverential acknowledgment of the divine condeſcenſion, he thus expreſſed his mingled affections.

V. 18. *Poured oil upon it.*] Expreſſing, as well as he was able in his preſent ſituation, his willing mind to offer

Beth-el: but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the firſt.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, ſaying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on;

21 So that I come again to my father's houſe in peace: then ſhall the LORD be my God;

22 And this ſtone, which I have ſet *for* a pillar, ſhall be God's houſe: and of all that thou ſhalt give me, I will ſurely give the tenth unto thee.

the ſacrifice of praiſe, and his deſire to keep in remembrance the goodneſs of the Lord, who had anſwered him in the day of his diſtreſs. (xxxv. 1—5.)

V. 19. *Bethel.*] That is, *The houſe of God.*

V. 20. *Vowed a vow*, &c.] Jacob ſolemnly bound himſelf unto God, by a voluntary engagement to do as follows.—This does not imply in him any unbelieving diſtruſt of the divine promiſe, or diſpoſition to dictate to the Lord; or as if otherwiſe he would not have him for his God. But he merely takes the Lord's words, puts the moſt moderate ſenſe upon them, and intimates, that having food and raiment, he deſires no more; and that, when he returned in peace as was promiſed, he would publicly ſet up the worſhip of the Lord his God, as his father and grandfather had done; build an altar in that very ſpot, and offer the tenth of all the ſubſtance he brought back with him, to the immediate ſervice of God and the ſupport of his worſhip. All he engaged for was lawful and practicable; and the circumſtances, the place of this ſolemn worſhip, and the proportion of his goods to be thus dedicated, were in themſelves things diſcretionary, and thus the proper matter for a religious vow.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is incumbent upon parents to unite their influence and authority, with their wiſdom and experience, in warning, adviſing, and charging things of importance upon the conſciences of their children: and when ſuch inſtructions are joined with fervent affectionate prayers, they are likely to make a deep impreſſion. It is alſo well, when former miſcarriages render us more watchful and attentive, and when we have humility enough openly and explicitly to retract what we have erroneouſly attempted. Good examples of obedience to God and godly parents cannot but make ſome impreſſions even upon the profane and malicious: but a few external acts of partial or imaginary amendment, which only ſpring from a deſire of pleaſing men, too often ſerve as a fatal quietus to the conſcience.—We know not to what hardſhips we may in God's providence be called: it is good therefore to inure ourſelves to labour and ſelf-denial: the very things which are intolerable to the delicate and luxurious, are ſcarcely inconvenient to thoſe who have been accuſtomed to labour and

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1ſt. Jacob's arrival at his journey's end, and his conference with the ſhepherds of Haran, v. 1—8. 2d. His meeting with Rachel; entertainment by Laban, and agreement to ſerve ſeven years for Rachel, v. 11—20. 3d. The cheat put upon him by Laban and Leah; his remonſtrance, Laban's excuſe, and his marrying both ſiſters, and ſerving fourteen years, v. 21—30. 4th. Rachel's barrenneſs, and Leah's fruitfulneſs, v. 31—35.

THEN Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the eaſt.

fare hardly.—When the Lord hath made his offending children ſenſible of, and penitent for, their miſconduct, he will again encourage them, leſt they ſhould be ſwallowed up of over-much ſorrow: and generally the ſweeteſt comforts are afforded in the ſharpeſt trials, and ſurpriſe us when ready to faint under deſerved rebukes. When the ſoul by faith can ſee Chriſt, the true ladder, opening the way of communication betwixt heaven and earth, and ſecuring to us acceptance with God, the protection of his providence, the miniſtrations of his angels, and the conſolations of his Spirit, every place will become pleaſant, and every proſpect joyful. With ſuch a guide, companion, and Comforter, we may defy all enemies, out-brave all dangers, and deſpiſe all difficulties: every thing muſt ſpeed well, and end well; and he will never leave us, until his laſt promiſe is accompliſhed in our everlaſting felicity. It is well when the places and ordinances, in which God is more eſpecially preſent, are regarded with ſolemn reverence; and when peculiar conſolations leave us filled with holy awe, prepared for ſelf-denying ſervices, and diſpoſed to adopt every means of keeping the Lord's goodneſs in remembrance. Many *an Iſraelite indeed*, who had been for a time burdened with guilt, oppreſſed with deſponding fears, and conflicting with difficulties and temptations; having at length unexpectedly been ſurpriſed with ſweet peace, and a ſenſe of pardoning mercy, through the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit, has, in adoring gratitude, ſurnamed the ſcene of ſuch a deliverance, *Bethel*; has deemed it the very houſe of God, and the gate of heaven; and perhaps been afraid to quit it, leſt he ſhould loſe the ſweet conſolations which he had taſted, or forget the loving kindeſs of the Lord. At ſuch a time how ready are we to enquire, what we ſhall render unto the Lord for his goodneſs! How willing are we to forego all worldly conſiderations, and to be content with food and raiment, however mean and hard-earned! How do we ſtand prepared for any ſervice or ſuffering; and by ſolemn vows to yield ourſelves unto the Lord, to take him for our God, and to devote all we have and are to his glory! All this is well, and as it ſhould be: but oh! that there were at all times ſuch a heart in us! Let us remember our Bethels, be aſhamed of our forgetfulneſs, and pay the vows which we vowed in the day, when the Lord anſwered us in our diſtreſs.

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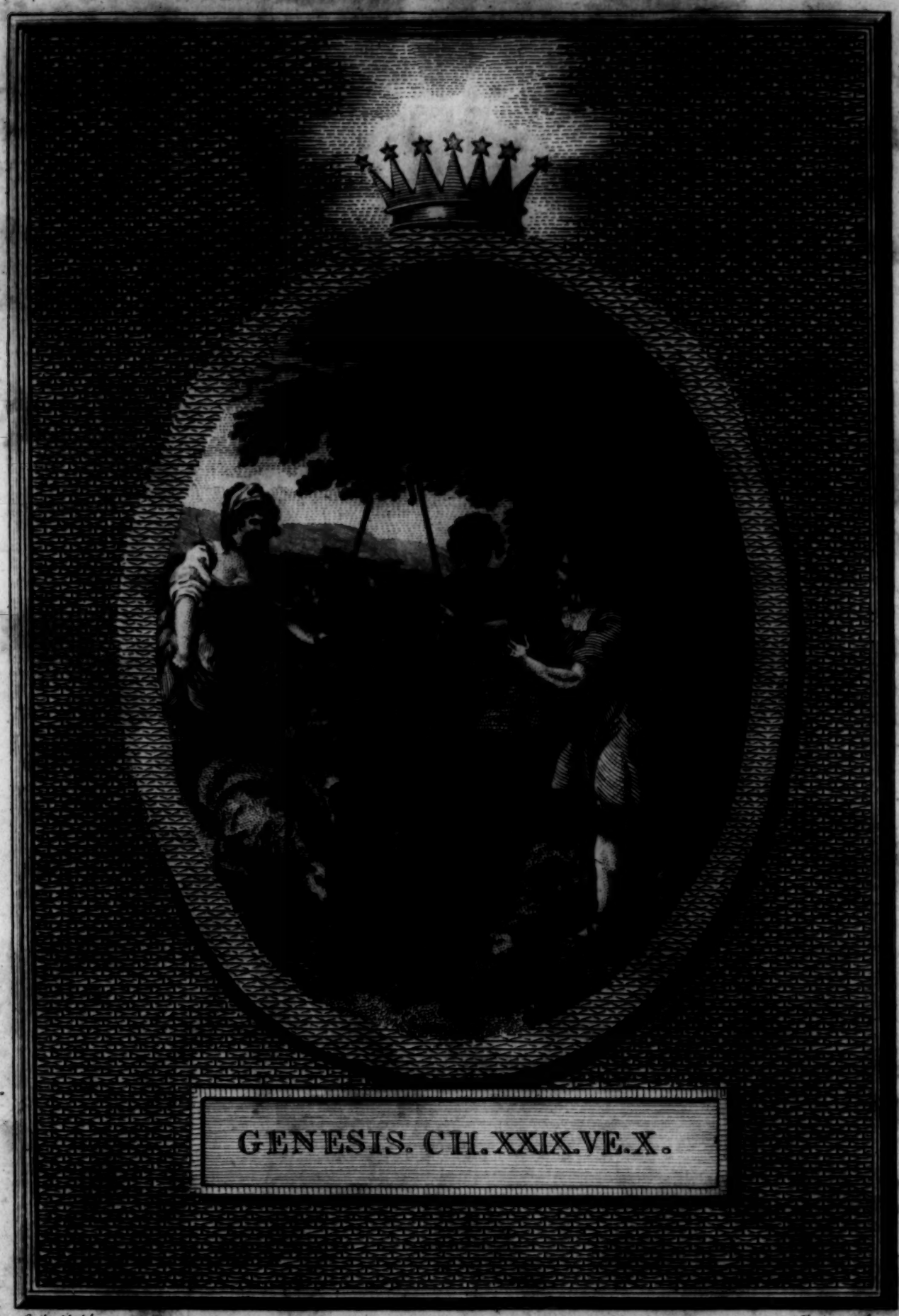

GENESIS. CH. XXIX. VE. X.

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2 And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there *were* three flocks of ſheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great ſtone *was* upon the well's mouth.

3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the ſtone from the well's mouth, and watered the ſheep, and put the ſtone again upon the well's mouth in his place.

4 And Jacob ſaid unto them, My brethren, whence *be* ye? and they ſaid, Of Haran *are* we.

5 And he ſaid unto them, Know ye Laban the ſon of Nahor? And they ſaid, We know *him*.

6 And he ſaid unto them, *Is* he well? And they ſaid, *He is* well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the ſheep.

7 And he ſaid, Lo, *it is* yet high day, neither *is it* time that the cattle ſhould be gathered together: water ye the ſheep, and go *and* feed *them*.

8 And they ſaid, We cannot until all the flocks be gathered together, and *till* they roll the ſtone from the well's mouth; then we water the ſheep.

9 And while he yet ſpake with them, Rachel came with her father's ſheep: for ſhe kept them.

10 And it came to paſs, when Jacob ſaw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the ſheep of Laban his mother's brother; that Jacob went near, and rolled the ſtone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

11 And Jacob kiſſed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

12 And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father's brother, and that he *was* Rebekah's ſon: and ſhe ran and told her father.

13 And it came to paſs, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his ſiſter's ſon, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kiſſed him, and brought him to his houſe. And he told Laban all theſe things.

14 And Laban ſaid to him, Surely thou *art* my bone and my fleſh: and he abode with him the ſpace of a month.

15 And Laban ſaid unto Jacob, Becauſe thou *art* my brother, ſhouldſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me what *ſhall* thy wages *be?*

16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel.

17 Leah *was* tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured.

18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and ſaid, I will ſerve thee ſeven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19 And Laban ſaid, *It is* better that I give her to thee, than that I ſhould give her to another man: abide with me.

20 And Jacob ſerved ſeven years for Rachel; and they ſeemed unto him *but* a few days, for the love he had to her.

21 And Jacob ſaid unto Laban, Give *me*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 5. *Laban the ſon of Nahor.*] That is the deſcendant of Nahor; Laban ſeems to have been Nahor's grandſon This is very common in the language of Scripture.

V. 8. *We cannot*, &c.] This would have been contrary to ſome regulation, formed by mutual conſent, to prevent the waſte, or the unequal uſe, of the water, where it was ſo ſcarce and valuable.

V. 14. *My bone and my fleſh*] That is, a very near relation, being Laban's ſiſter's ſon.

V. 21. *Give me*, &c.] It hath been a queſtion of more difficulty than importance, whether Jacob married his wives previous to his firſt ſeven years ſervice, or not until its expiration: but the language of the narration ſeems to determine, that he waited, old as he was, till ſeven years were expired before his marriage. To this indeed ſome objections have been made, eſpecially from the circumſtances of Judah's family, previous to, and at their going down into Egypt. This event took place when Joſéph was not above 40, and Judah, according to this calculation, not above 44 years of age: now Judah had had two ſons, both married to Tamar in ſucceſſion (xxxviii.); after their death he himſelf had Pharez by inceſtuous commerce with her, and Pharez was married and had two children when Jacob went down into Egypt. This ſuppoſes, that all theſe parties, Judah, Onan, and Pharez, married and had children as young as at thirteen or fourteen years of age. (xlvi. 12—26.) But add ſeven years

my

my wife, (for my days are fulfilled,) that I may go in unto her.

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feaſt.

23 And it came to paſs in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him: and he went in unto her.

24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid *for* an handmaid.

25 And it came to paſs that in the morning, behold it *was* Leah: and he ſaid to Laban, What *is* this thou haſt done unto me? did not I ſerve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then haſt thou beguiled me?

26 And Laban ſaid, It muſt not be ſo done in our country, to give the younger before the firſt-born.

27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this alſo, for the ſervice which thou ſhalt ſerve with me yet ſeven other years.

28 And Jacob did ſo, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife alſo.

29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid.

30 And he went in alſo unto Rachel, and he loved alſo Rachel more than Leah, and ſerved with him yet ſeven other years.

31 And when the LORD ſaw that Leah *was* hated, he opened her womb: but Rache *was* barren.

32 And Leah conceived and bare a ſon, and ſhe called his name Reuben: for ſhe ſaid, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my huſband will love me.

33 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſaid, Becauſe the LORD hath heard that I *was* hated, he hath therefore given me this *ſon* alſo: and ſhe called his name Simeon.

34 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſaid, Now this time will my huſband be joined unto me, becauſe I have born him three ſons: therefore was his name called Levi.

35 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſhe ſaid, Now will I praiſe the LORD: therefore ſhe called his name Judah, and left bearing.

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more, by ſuppoſing Jacob married when he firſt went to Laban, and this would allow ſixteen or ſeventeen years to each ſucceſſion. There is however another method of getting over this difficulty, which will be mentioned in its proper place. Without anticipating the reader's deciſion, it may be proper to obſerve, that it is very obvious Judah, and the other deſcendants of Jacob, married very young: and though it was proper that the perſons, to whom the promiſe was immediately made, ſhould, in evidence or exerciſe of their faith, live long unmarried or childleſs; yet it might naturally be expected that afterwards the progenitors of ſuch a numerous poſterity ſhould marry, and have children as ſoon as poſſible.

V. 23. *Took Leah.*] Thus he, who by perſonating Eſau had impoſed upon his father, was impoſed upon by Laban and Leah, in a very important concern, by a like deception.

V. 26. *It muſt not*, &c.] We have reaſon to think that this was a mere pretence; or if it were any thing more, Jacob ought to have been previouſly informed.

V. 31. *Hated.*] Jacob loved Rachel moſt; (30,) and through that preference was led, in many reſpects, to treat Leah with ſuch indifference and neglect, as reſembled hatred.

V. 32—35.] Reuben ſignifies, *ſee a ſon*; Simeon, *hearing*; Levi, *union*; and Judah, *praiſe*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Gracious conſolations are intended as cordials to animate and ſtrengthen us, that we may run without wearineſs and walk without fainting, in the arduous and ſelf-denying paths of obedience: and in ſo doing, we ſhall ſpeedily experience the Lord's faithfulneſs to his promiſes. Thus far he accompanied, and kept Jacob, in all the places through which he went. We cannot but feel a diſpoſition to approve the ſimplicity, courteouſneſs, and benevolence, which mark this firſt interview betwixt Jacob and the ſhepherds: the frank manner in which he makes his obſervations, offers his advice, and affords his aſſiſtance; and the mild and candid reception he meets with from them: though proud ſpirits are often offended with ſuch intimations of miſtake or blame. He who has all hearts in his hands, diſpoſes all things for the good of thoſe who truſt in and follow him, and works upon the natural affection even of ſelfiſh hearts to procure them kind entertainment. But they who are ſkillful and active in buſineſs, being capable of rendering themſelves uſeful, will generally, when known, be made welcome:—nor ſhould our relations be leſs rewarded for their ſervices than others, but ſhould meet with greater encouragement.—Whatever be the object of love, it is a moſt active and powerful principle; and not only engages a man in hard and difficult

CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1ſt. Rachel's envy and impatience, with Jacob's anger and rebuke, v. 1, 2. *2d. Jacob eſpouſing Bilhah at Rachel's, and Zilpah at Leah's requeſt, and the names of his children by them, v.* 3—13. *3d. Leah's other children and their names, v.* 14—21. *4th. Rachel bearing Joſeph, v.* 22—24. *5th. Jacob's further agreement with Laban, and his conſequent proſperity, v.* 25—43.

AND when Rachel ſaw that ſhe bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her ſiſter; and ſaid unto Jacob, Give me children, or elſe I die.

2 And Jacob's anger was kindled againſt Rachel; and he ſaid, *Am* I in God's ſtead? who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

3 And ſhe ſaid, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and ſhe ſhall bear upon my knees, that I may alſo have children by her.

4 And ſhe gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a ſon.

6 And Rachel ſaid, God hath judged me, and hath alſo heard my voice, and hath given me a ſon: therefore called ſhe his name Dan.

7 And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a ſecond ſon.

8 And Rachel, ſaid, With great wreſtlings have I wreſtled with my ſiſter, and I have prevailed: and ſhe called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah ſaw that ſhe had left bearing, ſhe took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

10 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a ſon.

11 And Leah ſaid, A troop cometh: and ſhe called his name Gad.

12 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a ſecond ſon.

13 And Leah ſaid, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me bleſſed: and ſhe called his name Aſher.

14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat-harveſt, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel ſaid to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy ſon's mandrakes.

15 And ſhe ſaid unto her, *Is it* a ſmall matter that thou haſt taken my huſband? and wouldſt thou take away my ſon's mandrakes alſo? And Rachel ſaid, Therefore he ſhall lie with thee to night for thy ſon's mandrakes.

16 And Jacob came out of the field in the

ſervices, but even renders them delightful. If the Lord have our ſupreme love, we ſhall greatly delight in his commandments, and all our other affections will be regulated and ſubordinated by it, and rendered lawful and uſeful: yet times may come, when we muſt, in the ſuperiority of our love to him, be called to diſregard our deareſt friends, as if we hated them. But, on the other hand, if they have our *ſupreme regard*, we ſhall for their ſakes deſpiſe and neglect the Lord.—How often in God's providence are men paid in their own coin, reminded of their ſin in their puniſhment, and corrected by others much worſe than themſelves? Yet in all this the Lord is righteous. One cannot but lament to ſee Jacob cheated into polygamy, after living ſo many years unmarried; and ſurely we may obſerve that the malice and artifice of Satan are diſcernible in this buſineſs.—However, the Lord ſo ſets one thing againſt another, that there is leſs difference in the comparative happineſs of mankind, than ſuperficial obſervers imagine: and in the moſt ordinary circumſtances of private life, the hand of the Lord is to be acknowledged: "Lo! children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage "and gift that cometh of the Lord," and are to be received as ſent by him, and trained up for him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *Give me*, &c.] That is, 'I 'ſhall fret myſelf to death; my heart will be broken with 'inward anguiſh.' It may be uſeful to compare this impatience of Rachel with Rebekah's conduct when barren 20 years, and with Hannah's weeping, praying, humble requiſition and ſolemn vow. (1 *Sam.* i.)

V. 3. *Upon my knees.*] Rachel meant, that ſhe would adopt and nurſe Bilhah's children as her own, and thus ſolace herſelf under the trial and reproach of barrenneſs. Had not her ſiſter been her rival, and had not her heart been diſtorted with malignant paſſions, ſhe would have thought Leah's children nearer to her, and more entitled to her care, than Bilhah's.

V. 6. *Dan.*] That is, *judgment.*

V. 8. *Naphthali.*] That is, *wreſtlings.*

V. 11. *Gad.*] That is, *a troop.*

V. 13. *Aſher.*] That is, *bleſſed.*

V. 14. *Mandrakes.*] Theſe were probably either fruit, or flowers, pleaſing to the eye, the taſte, or the ſmell; but we know not what.

V. 15, 16.] The ambition good in itſelf, but often

evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and ſaid, Thou muſt come in unto me, for ſurely I have hired thee with my ſon's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and ſhe conceived and bare Jacob the fifth ſon.

18 And Leah ſaid, God hath given me mine hire, becauſe I have given my maiden to my huſband: and ſhe called his name Iſſachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the ſixth ſon.

20 And Leah ſaid, God hath endued me *with* a good dowry; now will my huſband dwell with me, becauſe I have borne him ſix ſons: and ſhe called his name Zebulun.

21 And afterwards ſhe bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

23 And ſhe conceived and bare a ſon: and ſaid, God hath taken away my reproach.

24 And ſhe called his name Joſeph; and ſaid, The LORD ſhall add to me another ſon.

25 And it came to paſs, when Rachel had borne Joſeph, that Jacob ſaid unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

26 Give *me* my wives and my children, for whom I have ſerved thee, and let me go: for thou knoweſt my ſervice which I have done thee.

27 And Laban ſaid unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, *tarry*: for I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath bleſſed me for thy ſake.

28 And he ſaid, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give *it*.

29 And he ſaid unto him, Thou knoweſt how I have ſerved thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

30 For *it was* little which thou hadſt before I *came*, and it is *now* increaſed unto a multitude: and the LORD hath bleſſed thee ſince my coming: and now when ſhall I provide for mine own houſe alſo?

31 And he ſaid, What ſhall I give thee? And Jacob ſaid, Thou ſhalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed *and* keep thy flock:

32 I will paſs through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the ſpeckled, and ſpotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the ſheep, and the ſpotted and ſpeckled among the goats: and *of ſuch* ſhall be my hire.

33 So ſhall my righteouſneſs anſwer for me in time to come, when it ſhall come for my hire before thy face: every one that *is* not ſpeckled and ſpotted amongſt the goats, and brown amongſt the ſheep, that ſhall be accounted ſtolen with me.

34 And Laban ſaid, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

35 And he removed that day the he-goats, that were ring-ſtraked and ſpotted, and all

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inordinate and irregular, of being the mother of the promiſed Seed; together with the honour of being prolific, and the reproach of being barren, were probably the chief ſources of this unbecoming conteſt.

V. 18. *God*, &c.] Leah was ſo far from conſidering herſelf culpable in giving her handmaiden to her huſband, that ſhe ignorantly deemed it meritorious, and erroneouſly interpreted the Lord's kindneſs as the reward of it. (8.) Iſſachar ſignifies *hire*.

V. 20. *Zebulun*.] Signifies *dowry*.

V. 24. *Joſeph*.] That is, *he hath added*.

V. 26. *For whom*, &c.] The fourteen years being now expired, Jacob was willing to depart without any other recompence for his hard ſervice, except his large family; or any other proviſion, except God's promiſe. But he had, in many ways, an equitable claim on Laban's ſubſtance, and it was the will of God that he ſhould be provided for out of it.

V. 30. *Since my coming*, &c.] Laban had acknowledged that the Lord had bleſſed him for Jacob's ſake; but Jacob, with obſervable modeſty, only ſaid, that it was *ſince his coming*.

V. 31. *Any thing*, &c.] As ſtated wages; but that which the providence of God ſhould allot in the following manner.

V. 33. *So ſhall my*, &c.] It would appear that Jacob had acted honeſtly; when none but thoſe of the ſtipulated colours ſhould be found among his cattle.

V. 34. *Behold, I would*, &c.] Laban, who was a ſelfiſh man, argued from common obſervation, and concluded that the white cattle would engender few or none of other colours: But Jacob thus made his appeal to God to recompenſe him as he pleaſed for his labours.

the ſhe-goats that were ſpeckled and ſpotted, *and* every one that had *ſome* white in it, and all the brown among the ſheep, and gave *them* into the hand of his ſons.

36 And he ſet three days journey betwixt himſelf and Jacob: and Jacob fed the reſt of Laban's flocks.

37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the haſel and cheſnut-tree; and pilled white ſtrakes in them, and made the white appear which *was* in the rods.

38 And he ſet the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs, when the flocks came to drink; that they ſhould conceive when they came to drink.

39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ring-ſtraked, ſpeckled, and ſpotted.

40 And Jacob did ſeparate the lambs, and ſet the faces of the flocks toward the ring-ſtraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themſelves; and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

41 And it came to paſs whenſoever the ſtronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put *them* not in: ſo the feebler were Laban's, and the ſtronger Jacob's.

43 And the man increaſed exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-ſervants, and men-ſervants, and camels, and aſſes.

V. 37. *And Jacob took*, &c.] This has generally been conſidered as an inſtance of Jacob's policy and management; and has by ſome been objected to, and by others commended: but I do not ſuppoſe that ſuch a contrivance would be found in general to produce a ſimilar effect. It ſhould rather be conſidered as done by intimation from God; and as a mere ſignal, or token of his power, performing a ſupernatural operation; or at leaſt giving a new and uncommon bias to the tendency of natural cauſes. (xxxi. 12.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is dangerous for eminent ſaints to ſanction any thing evil by their example: becauſe it is ſo eaſy and natural to imitate their miſtakes; and even to go beyond thoſe in tranſgreſſion, whoſe example of faith and obedience we by no means equal; nay, we are apt to think ourſelves authoriſed, or at leaſt excuſed in ſo doing. What an unhappy precedent was Sarah to Rachel and Leah, and Abraham to Jacob! We are grieved to ſee this plain man, in his old age, yielding to one ſuggeſtion after another to multiply wives; though by that means he only multiplied bitter envying, and contention in his family. This his way was his folly; though many of his poſterity approved and imitated his example. To carry matters even betwixt two wives, who have an equal claim to affection, is almoſt, if not entirely impoſſible: and to fail of it enſures emulation, and ſtrife, and every evil work; even perpetuating diſcord to poſterity. How much more comfortably did Iſaac live with his one wife, according to God's primary inſtitution!—Envy and jealouſy are moſt tormenting paſſions to the breaſt which harbours them, very vexatious to all around us, and introductory to much impatience and ungodlineſs. We ſhould do well to obſerve how abſurd and odious they appear in Rachel, that we may watch and pray againſt them in ourſelves; and turn aſide from all ſuch objects and purſuits, as tend to excite them. Too frequently they, who poſſeſs the moſt beautiful countenances, are lamentably deficient in the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God, and of all wiſe men, of much greater value: and *partial* affections are oft corrected by the perſons, on whom they are miſplaced—They who are only angry at ſin, and expreſs that anger only by reaſonable though ſharp rebuke, and with zeal for the honour of God, are not ſinfully angry; nor muſt thoſe we love beſt be connived at in wickedneſs.—Our natural conſcience is a partial and erroneous judge, and, if left to itſelf, will often excuſe, nay commend our very faults: we have need therefore to ſeek to the word, and pray for the Spirit of God, to illuminate our underſtanding, and deliver our conſcience from miſtake and ſelf-flattery.—Still, however, the Lord hears the prayer of faith, and paſſes by the tranſgreſſion of his people; and graciouſly recompenſes and honours their integrity and faithful induſtry. He convinces all, with whom they are connected, that he hath loved them, and that he bleſſes others on their account: ſo that it is not uncommon for thoſe, who love neither their perſons nor their godlineſs, to value them for the ſake of their own intereſt; and to deſire to deal with, and employ them in preference to others: and all that name the name of Chriſt ſhould, for the honour of his Goſpel, be ambitious of this diſtinction.—The Lord will alſo, one way or other, plead the cauſe of the injured and oppreſſed; and honour thoſe, who ſimply truſt his providence, are careful to do no evil, avoid the appearance of it, and walk ſo wiſely, as to give no occaſion of reproach to thoſe, who manifeſtly are ſeeking it. As the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof, he has a right to diſpoſe of every one's property as he pleaſes; and who ſhall dare to find fault with his appointments?

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1ſt. The envy and reſentment of Laban and his ſons, and the Lord's command and promiſe to Jacob, v. 1—3. 2d. Jacob's conſequent converſation with his wives about leaving their father, v. 4—16. 3d. Their private departure, v. 17—21. 4th. Laban's purſuit of them, God ſpeaking to him in a dream; Laban overtaking Jacob, and expoſtulating with him; and Jacob vindicating himſelf, v. 22—42. 5th. Their amicable concluſion and covenant, and Laban leaving Jacob, v. 43—55.

AND he heard the words of Laban's ſons, ſaying, Jacob hath taken away all that *was* our father's; and of *that* which *was* our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it *was* not toward him as before.

3 And the LORD ſaid unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

4 And Jacob ſent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

5 And ſaid unto them, I ſee your father's countenance, that it *is* not towards me as before: but the God of my father hath been with me.

6 And ye know that with all my power I have ſerved your father.

7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times: but God ſuffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he ſaid thus, The ſpeckled ſhall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare ſpeckled: and if he ſaid thus, The ring-ſtraked ſhall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-ſtraked.

9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given *them* to me.

10 And it came to paſs at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and ſaw in a dream, and behold the rams which leaped upon the cattle *were* ring-ſtraked, ſpeckled, and griſled.

11 And the angel of God ſpake unto me in a dream, *ſaying*, Jacob: And I ſaid, Here *am* I.

12 And he ſaid, Lift up now thine eyes and ſee, all the rams which leap upon the cattle *are* ring-ſtraked, ſpeckled, and griſled: for I have ſeen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

13 I *am* the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedſt the pillar, *and* where thou vowedſt a vow unto me: now ariſe, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

14 And Rachel and Leah anſwered, and ſaid unto him, *Is there* yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's houſe?

15 Are we not counted of him ſtrangers? for he hath ſold us, and hath quite devoured alſo our money.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *It was not*, &c.] Laban appeared ſo diſſatisfied, and expreſſed in his looks ſo much envy and reſentment, that Jacob deemed it dangerous to continue longer with him: yet he did not move, until the Lord expreſsly commanded him; perhaps thinking it ſtill more dangerous to come within the reach of his brother.

V. 7. *Ten times.*] As the hiſtory of theſe ſix years is very compendious, we cannot determine, whether Laban changed Jacob's wages exactly ten times, or whether it mean generally many times. It is plain, however, that Laban tried all methods of circumventing and defrauding Jacob, but in vain.

V. 10. *Behold the rams*, &c.] The Lord called on Jacob peculiarly to note this circumſtance, that he might be ſatisfied it was not the effect of chance, or human policy, but his own expreſs appointment: in order that he might poſſeſs his ſubſtance with a quiet conſcience, and a thankful heart; regardleſs of the unmerited anger and reproaches of Laban and his ſons.

V. 11—13.] *The angel of God ſpake—I am the God of Beth-el:* The reader ſhould carefully note this and ſimilar language, as continually augmenting the evidence that the ſpeaker was no other than the Word and Son of God, who was God, and with God, and now condeſcended to be the Angel or Meſſenger of the Father to men; as he afterwards did in human nature to take upon him the form of a ſervant. Yet in both manifeſtations of himſelf He could ſay: "He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the "Father; for I and the Father are One." This title, the *God of Beth-el*, &c. would be peculiarly encouraging, quickening and edifying to Jacob.

V. 15. *Are we not counted*, &c.?] Rachel and Leah meant that Laban, inſtead of providing for them as children, had ſold them as ſtrangers and ſlaves for the increaſe of his wealth.

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16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that *is* our's, and our children's: now then whatſoever God hath ſaid unto thee do.

17 Then Jacob roſe up, and ſet his ſons and his wives upon camels.

18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram; for to go to Iſaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to ſhear his ſheep: and Rachel had ſtolen the images that *were* her father's.

20 And Jacob ſtole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

21 So he fled with all that he had, and he roſe up, and paſſed over the river, and ſet his face *toward* the mount Gilead.

22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

23 And he took his brethren with him, and purſued after him ſeven days journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and ſaid unto him, Take heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob either good or bad.

25 Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

26 And Laban ſaid to Jacob, What haſt thou done, that thou haſt ſtolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives *taken* with the ſword?

27 Wherefore didſt thou flee away ſecretly, and ſteal away from me? and didſt not tell me, that I might have ſent thee away with mirth, and with ſongs, with tabret, and with harp?

28 And haſt not ſuffered me to kiſs my ſons and my daughters? thou haſt now done fooliſhly in *ſo* doing.

29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father ſpake unto me yeſter-night, ſaying, Take thou heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now *though* thou wouldſt needs be gone, becauſe thou ſore longeſt after thy father's houſe; *yet* wherefore haſt thou ſtolen my gods?

31 And Jacob anſwered and ſaid to Laban, Becauſe I was afraid: for I ſaid, Peradventure thou wouldſt take by force thy daughters from me.

32 With whomſoever thou findeſt thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren diſcern thou what *is* thine with me, and take *it* to thee: for Jacob knew not that Rachel had ſtolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-ſervants tents; but he found *them* not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and ſat upon them: and Laban ſearched all the tent, but found *them* not.

35 And ſhe ſaid to her father, Let it not diſpleaſe my lord that I cannot riſe up before thee; for the cuſtom of women *is* upon me;

V. 16. *That is our's*, &c.] God hath thus provided for us, and we acknowledge his hand in it, and expect and deſire no more.

V. 19. *Images*, &c.] Learned men are not agreed what theſe images or *teraphim* were. It is plain they had been uſed for idolatrous purpoſes: but it is not equally evident what Rachel's motive was in taking them away; whether ſhe intended to uſe them in idolatry, or to prevent her father from ſo doing. She, however, did wrong, and expoſed herſelf and the reſt of the company to danger; and they afterwards ſeem to have been a ſnare to Jacob's family. (xxxv. 2—4.)

V. 21. *The river*.] That is Euphrates.

V. 23. *Purſued after*, &c.] Without doubt Laban intended at leaſt to have plundered Jacob, or to have conſtrained his return;—but the Lord withheld him.

V. 26. *As captives*, &c.] This was very falſe and injurious: Jacob had a nearer intereſt in Leah and Rachel than Laban had: and they had voluntarily agreed to go with their huſband, rather than abide with their father; and indeed this was their duty.

V. 27, 28.] Laban pretended to ſo amicable a diſpoſition, now that he was overawed and durſt not hurt Jacob and his company.

V. 30. *Sore longeſt*, &c.] Laban would thus inſinuate that Jacob had no other cauſe of diſſatisfaction.

V. 31. *Becauſe I was afraid*, &c.] Jacob anſwered the former queſtion in the firſt place, without mentioning it: Becauſe I was afraid, therefore I ſtole away.

V. 32. *Let him not live*, &c.] This was raſh, and might have produced fatal effects: but Jacob was partial to Rachel, and ſuſpected her not.

and he ſearched, but found not the images.

36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob anſwered, and ſaid to Laban, What *is* my treſpaſs? what *is* my ſin, that thou haſt ſo hotly purſued after me?

37 Whereas thou haſt ſearched all my ſtuff, what haſt thou found of all thy houſhold-ſtuff? ſet *it* here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

38 This twenty years *have* I *been* with thee: thy ewes and thy ſhe-goats have not caſt their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39 That which was torn *of beaſts*, I brought not unto thee, I bare the loſs of it; of my hand didſt thou require it, *whether* ſtolen by day, or ſtolen by night.

40 *Thus* I was, in the day the drought conſumed me, and the froſt by night; and my ſleep departed from mine eyes.

41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy houſe; I ſerved thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and ſix years for thy cattle: and thou haſt changed my wages ten times.

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Iſaac had been with me, ſurely thou hadſt ſent me away now empty: God hath ſeen mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *thee* yeſternight.

43 And Laban anſwered, and ſaid unto Jacob, *Theſe* daughters *are* my daughters, and *theſe* children *are* my children, and *theſe* cattle *are* my cattle, and all that thou ſeeſt *is* mine: and what can I do this day unto theſe my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne?

44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witneſs between me and thee.

45 And Jacob took a ſtone, and ſet it up *for* a pillar.

46 And Jacob ſaid unto his brethren, Gather ſtones; and they took ſtones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

47 And Laban called it Jegar-ſahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 And Laban ſaid, This heap *is* a witneſs between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed:

49 And Mizpah; for he ſaid, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are abſent one from another.

50 If thou ſhalt afflict my daughters, or if thou ſhalt take *other* wives beſides my daughters, no man *is* with us; See, God *is* witneſs betwixt me and thee;

51 And Laban ſaid to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold *this* pillar, which I have caſt betwixt me and thee.

52 This heap *be* witneſs, and *this* pillar *be* witneſs, that I will not paſs over this heap to thee, and that thou ſhalt not paſs over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob ſware by the fear of his father Iſaac.

54 Then Jacob offered ſacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

55 And early in the morning Laban roſe up, and kiſſed his ſons and his daughters, and bleſſed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

V. 42. *The fear of Iſaac*, &c.] That is, the God, whom Iſaac (who was ſtill living) worſhipped with reverential fear (53.) Jacob did not uſe the ſame expreſſions reſpecting Abraham, who was entered upon a very different ſtate; in which however the God of the living, and not of the dead, continued to be his God.

V. 45, 46.] Thus a large heap was formed to be an abiding proof of this compact, and a reproach to him who ſhould paſs over it to injure the other.

V. 47. *Jegar-ſahadutha:—Galeed.*] The former in Syriac, the latter in Hebrew, ſignified *the heap of witneſs*.

V. 49. *Miſpah.*] *The watch tower.*

V. 54. *Offered ſacrifice*, &c.] Laban ſpake of a common ſenſual feaſt (27.); but Jacob offered a ſolemn ſacrifice, and feaſted the company in a religious manner. In this we read the different characters of the two men; and hence may form ſome eſtimate of the low ſtate of religion in Laban's family. This parting proved final, and we hear no more of Laban, or of any other of that branch of Abraham's family; who ſeem after this to have ſunk into idolatry, and to have been loſt amongſt the other Gentiles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How particularly are the affairs of theſe families related, whilſt the great events of ſtates and kingdoms are paſſed over in ſilence, and buried in obſcurity! Indeed the Bible

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CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob's vision of the angels, v. 1, 2. 2d. His message to Esau, the report of Esau's formidable preparation to meet him, and Jacob's terror, precaution, and prayer, v. 3—12. 3d. His intended present to Esau, directions to his servants, and passage of the brook Jabbok, v. 13—23. 4th. His wrestling at Peniel, and prevailing, v. 24—32.

AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau: Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now.

5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and

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is intended to teach people the duties of common life, and how to serve God, enjoy comfort, and do good in their several stations and relations: and but very few are concerned in the government of empires, compared with the numbers who support the characters of parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants.

Those objects, which the men of the world count "all "their glory," are so scanty, that in the pursuit or possession of them they stand in each other's way; and every one seems to be taking away from the rest: hence discontent, envy, and discord. But there are possessions of such amplitude, as to suffice for all, without any interference: happy they who seek them in the *first* place! However, we may thankfully receive, and chearfully use the portion which God's providence allots us, as far as we obtain it with a clear conscience, and a testimony in the consciences of others to our fidelity and integrity: and even if men should causelessly hate and criminate us, yet the Lord will plead our cause and make our very enemies to be at peace with us, when our ways please him: he will vindicate our character, do us justice, and over-rule all for our good.—In all our removals we should have respect to the command and promise of God, keeping our eye upon the openings of his providence: and if he be with us, we need not flinch in dangerous circumstances. And indeed so many are the perils with which we are surrounded, that nothing else can reasonably ensure our safety, or encourage our hearts.—The remembrance of favoured seasons of communion with God is very refreshing to us, when embarrassed in difficulties: and the recollection of our vows should be frequent, that we fail not to fulfil them.—Selfish men think themselves robbed of all that goes besides them; and covetousness will even swallow up natural affection.—Let us take heed and beware of it. (*Luke* xii. 13—21.) God can put a bridle into the mouth of wicked men, to restrain their malice without changing their hearts: and then, though they have no love for us, they will pretend to it, and try to make a merit of necessity. But great watchfulness will be necessary to keep out evil and the appearance of evil, even from those undertakings which are in themselves according to the will of God: yet nothing short of this can stop the mouths of our enemies, and make those ashamed who would speak evil of us.—There are seasons when a sharp reproof may consist with meekness, and reminding others of our services with humility: but much wisdom and grace is necessary on such occasions, that they may be well timed, well conducted, and unanswerably convincing; and they should always be accompanied with a disposition to forgiveness, to accept of even a partial apology, and to overlook injurious insinuations.—Those who mean honestly and kindly need not scruple assurances: but they should be solemnly entered into, in the fear of God, who is both the witness and the avenger of fraud and injustice.—And finally an amicable conclusion of differences, though upon disadvantageous terms, is generally preferable, both in respect of our innocence, peace, and interest, to the most successful litigation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1, 2.] A company of angels met Jacob, in some visible and glorious appearance, to encourage him with the assurance of the divine protection, especially from the power and anger of Esau: this he called, *God's host*, or *army*; by which we learn that they were numerous, and appeared very formidable and powerful, to protect or to destroy. *Mahanaim*, signifies *two armies:* as some suppose; the one to deliver him safe from Mesopatamia; the other to welcome him to Canaan, and receive him under their protection: or perhaps one encamping before, and the other behind him and his company, as his guard on every side; as well from Laban, as from Esau.

V. 3. *Seir*, &c.] Whilst Jacob, to whom the promise belonged, had wrought hard as a hired servant, Esau was become a prince, and had established his authority in Mount Seir, which was afterwards called by his name.

V. 5. *And I*, &c.] Jacob thus intimated that he was well satisfied with his present possessions, which were the fruit of his labour; and was ready to give up all pretensions to Isaac's substance, and to render his brother all suitable respect.

V. 6. *He cometh*, &c.] We have every reason to think that Esau's resentment revived at this message, and that he also

alſo he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and diſtreſſed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels into two bands;

8 And ſaid, If Eſau come to the one company and ſmite it, then the other company which is left ſhall eſcape.

9 And Jacob ſaid, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Iſaac, the LORD which ſaidſt unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eſau: for I fear him, leſt he will come and ſmite me, *and* the mother with the children.

12 And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good, and make thy ſeed as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 And he lodged there that ſame night; and took of that which came to his hand, a preſent for Eſau his brother;

14 Two hundred ſhe-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams.

15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty ſhe-aſſes and ten foles.

16 And he delivered *them* into the hand of his ſervants, every drove by themſelves; and ſaid unto his ſervants, Paſs over before me, and put a ſpace betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremoſt, ſaying, When Eſau my brother meeteth thee, and aſketh thee, ſaying, Whoſe *art* thou? and whither goeſt thou? and whoſe *are* theſe before thee?

18 Then thou ſhalt ſay, They *be* thy ſervant Jacob's; it *is* a preſent ſent unto my lord Eſau: and behold alſo he *is* behind us.

19 And ſo commanded he the ſecond, and the third, and all that followed the droves, ſaying, On this manner ſhall you ſpeak unto Eſau, when you find him.

20 And ſay ye moreover, Behold, thy ſervant Jacob *is* behind us: for he ſaid, I will appeaſe him with the preſent that goeth before me, and afterward I will ſee his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

21 So went the preſent over before him: and himſelf lodged that night in the company.

22 And he roſe up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-ſervants, and his eleven ſons, and paſſed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and ſent them over the brook, and ſent over that he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone: and there

ſet out with malicious intentions, though God ſuffered him not to execute them: and Jacob evidently drew this concluſion from the report of the meſſengers.

V. 9—12.] There cannot be a finer model of genuine prayer than this: a thankful acknowledgment of former unmerited favours; a humble confeſſion of entire unworthineſs; an unaffected deſcription of his fears and diſtreſs; an unreſerved reference of the whole matter to the Lord renouncing all other dependence, and reſting all his hopes on him; an explicit mention of the very words both of the Lord's promiſes and commands, as pleading for him, and engaging the glory of God on his behalf; and an anxiety more for the preſervation of his family than for his own, but eſpecially of his children, in whoſe lives the promiſes ſeemed chiefly concerned: theſe things are worthy of notice, and of our imitation, when we approach the Lord in prayer.—Thus Jacob made the name of the Lord his ſtrong tower, and could not but be ſafe: thus he filled his mouth with arguments, and could not but prevail.

V. 18. *Thy ſervant Jacob—My lord Eſau.*] Though Jacob had purchaſed the birth-right, and the dominion had been expreſsly promiſed him in the bleſſing: yet underſtanding them, in their temporal ſenſe, as belonging rather to his poſterity than to him; and ſatisfied with the ſpiritual benefits for himſelf, he thus paid homage to Eſau as an acknowledged ſuperior.

V. 24. *Jacob was*, &c.] Jacob ſtaid behind, to renew his earneſt ſupplications.—Nothing requires more vigour, activity, patience, attention, and unwearied unremitting exertions, than the exerciſe of wreſtling: and it ſeems to be intended as a deſcriptive emblem of the true ſpirit of faith and prayer. They, who are poſſeſſed of that ſpirit, muſt

wreſtled a man with him, until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he ſaw that he prevailed not againſt him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wreſtled with him.

26 And he ſaid, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he ſaid, I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.

27 And he ſaid unto him, What *is* thy name? And he ſaid, Jacob.

28 And he ſaid, Thy name ſhall be called no more Jacob, but Iſrael: for as a prince haſt thou power with God and with men, and haſt prevailed.

29 And Jacob aſked *him*, and ſaid, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name: And he ſaid, Wherefore *is* it, *that* thou doſt aſk after my name? and he bleſſed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have ſeen God face to face, and my life is preſerved.

31 And as he paſſed over Penuel, the ſun roſe upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Iſrael eat not *of* the ſinew which ſhrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: becauſe he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, in the ſinew that ſhrank.

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expect ſharp and long trials in the path of duty, and many conflicts with divers opponents. Even from the Lord himſelf they will be tried with various delays and diſcouragements: but they are encouraged to pray without ceaſing; to pray always and not faint; to perſiſt in prayer, and to watch thereunto with all perſeverance. They are ſtirred up, by difficulties and delays, to be more earneſt and importunate, and thus to riſe ſuperior to all diſcouragements; nay, to draw arguments from them. And they, who thus wreſtle in prayer, always at laſt prevail with God. When, therefore, Jacob had ſpent much time in fervent ſupplication to that God who ſeeth in ſecret; one in faſhion as a man appeared to him, and engaged in wreſtling with him; to illuſtrate the nature and ſucceſs of his prayers.

V. 25. *Prevailed not*, &c.] This circumſtance ſignificantly marked out that frame of mind, which refuſes as it were to yield, and will not be put off with a denial. (*Matt.* xv. 21—28.) The perſon with whom Jacob wreſtled intimated, by touching and diſlocating the hollow of his thigh, that though he ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon, yet this was the effect of his mercy, and gracious acceptance of thoſe prayers, which he had taught and enabled him to make.—The diſlocation ſeems to have continued for no more than the moment, though the effect afterwards remained in ſome meaſure.

V. 26. *Let me go*, &c.] The morning now called Jacob to his employment in the care of his family; of which the Lord gave him an intimation by thus offering to depart.—As a wreſtler, he appeared to oppoſe Jacob, yet Jacob recognized in him a friend, yea that friend from whom all bleſſings come.

V. 28. *Thy name*, &c.] This change of name, from Jacob to Iſrael, ſignified, that he was no longer to be regarded as one who got the bleſſing by twice ſupplanting his elder brother, with ſome appearance of diſcredit; but as a *prince of God*, who had wreſtled with him, and prevailed for the bleſſing, to his everlaſting honour.—Having power with God, he would ſurely alſo prevail with man. Thus he was, ſo to ſpeak, knighted in the field; and all, who by faith and prayer prevail, inherit the ſame title, and are called the Iſrael of God.

V. 29. *Wherefore is it*, &c.?] Jacob could not remain in doubt or uncertainty in that reſpect, after what had paſſed: the Lord, however, bleſſed him there, probably ratifying to him the bleſſings covenanted to Abraham, &c.

V. 30. *Peniel*, &c.] Or, *The face of God.* The perſon who appeared to Jacob was before called a man, yet here he is called God. The prophet Hoſea calls him God, the Angel, even the Lord of Hoſts; and ſays, that he made ſupplication to him. (*Hoſea* xii. 3—5.) We cannot therefore have a doubt of the ſentiments of Jacob, of Moſes, and of Hoſea, concerning him who now wreſtled with Jacob, and ſurnamed him Iſrael. Certainly our creed will beſt accord with their's, if we believe that it was the ſecond perſon in the ſacred Trinity, who was afterwards God manifeſted in the fleſh, and dwelling in human nature is called Immanuel.

Jacob beholding the Lord in human form, was not overwhelmed by the appearance; as it was the general ſentiment, they muſt be, who beheld the glory of the divine majeſty. He had alſo received an aſſurance of deliverance from the dreaded reſentment of Eſau; and in both reſpects his life was preſerved.

V. 31. *He halted upon his thigh.*] He carried this token with him, that it was a reality, and not a dream, or deluſive imagination.

V. 32. *Therefore*, &c.] Probably this was done by ſome divine appointment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Although we cannot ſee the angels of God meeting us, and as God's hoſt encamping round us; yet if we poſſeſs that faith, which is the evidence of things not ſeen, we may have as full and comfortable aſſurance that they actually do ſo, as if we could behold them with our eyes. And we have need of the encouragement both of the guardianſhip of angels, and the protection of the God of angels, to render us ſecure and happy in ſuch a world as this; where the victory in one conflict only reminds us to arm for another; and deliverance from one trouble or

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The meeting of Eſau and Jacob, v. 1—4. *2d. Their amicable conference, and Eſau's departure, v.* 5—16. *3d. Jacob's abode at Succoth, v.* 17. *4th. His buying a field, and building an altar at Shechem, v.* 18—20.

AND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Eſau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two hand-maids.

2 And he put the hand-maids and their children foremoſt, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joſeph hindermoſt.

3 And he paſſed over before them, and bowed himſelf to the ground ſeven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Eſau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him: and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and ſaw the women and the children; and ſaid, Who *are* thoſe with thee? And he ſaid, The children which God hath graciouſly given thy ſervant.

6 Then the hand-maidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themſelves.

7 And Leah alſo with her children came near, and bowed themſelves: and after came Joſeph near, and Rachel, and they bowed themſelves.

8 And he ſaid, What meaneſt thou by all this drove, which I met? And he ſaid, *Theſe are* to find grace in the ſight of my lord.

9 And Eſau ſaid, I have enough; my brother, keep that thou haſt unto thyſelf.

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danger, to expect another. Yet frequently our ſevereſt trials reſult from former tranſgreſſions, and call them to our remembrance that we may be humbled for them.—Prudent precautions may and ought to be employed by thoſe who ſimply truſt in God; and to neglect them is to *tempt him*: nor are any means more proper to diſarm reſentment, eſpecially that of proud and worldly men, than humble reſpectful language, and yielding up the objects of contention. Yet theſe are but *means*, and without God arreſt and influence the heart, they will not ſubdue the power of jealouſy and revenge.—In times of urgent danger, the ſtrongeſt faith and repeated aſſurances will not entirely exclude terror and diſtreſs: but they will put life and vigour into humble fervent prayer, and enable us ſo to plead the Lord's promiſes and precepts; to remember former mercies and deliverances; and to leave ourſelves in the Lord's hands, as ſhall inſure protection, and reſtore peace to our ſouls.—Every duty has its ſeaſon; and the care of our families, providing againſt emergencies, and ſuitable attention to our relative engagements, may properly ſucceed, though they muſt not exclude, our devotions: and again, when we have uſed every prudent means for our own and others good, we muſt retire and pray for the bleſſing. If we are in a proper frame of mind, we ſhall rather abridge ourſelves of wonted refreſhments, than neglect our communion with God: nay, there may be urgent caſes, when even the night itſelf may not ſeem too long to pour out our hearts before him; and if our faith do not fail, nor our ſpirits flag, nor our ſouls grow formal, our devotions ſhould not be counted too long. When the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities, and our intenſe, earneſt, and vaſt deſires can ſcarcely find words large and emphatic enough to utter them, and we ſtill mean more than we can expreſs: then prayer is indeed wreſtling with God; and however tried or diſcouraged, we ſhall certainly prevail: he will approve our importunity, and largely communicate his bleſſings: and prevailing with him in prayer, we ſhall prevail againſt all our enemies that perſiſt to ſtrive with us, and prevail on many to be at peace with us. But it is only in human nature that ſinners can ſee God and live: the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God as reconciled in and through him, is the only object of a ſinner's acceptable worſhip: with him we may be as importunate as we pleaſe; and if in humble faith we determine not to let him go except he bleſs us, he will take it well: nor ſhould we ever leave wreſtling in nights of trouble or temptation, until the day break, nay, till the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe upon our ſouls. Thus ſhall we be acknowledged as true Iſraelites, and crowned as princes with God: and whilſt we carry away the memorials of our victories, we muſt record his goodneſs, for his glory and the benefit of others. Nor let us wonder, if even our ſweeteſt conſolations carry with them evidences of our infirmity; and if we have afterwards a thorn in the fleſh, to preſerve us from being exalted above meaſure.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 2. *Rachel*, &c.] Rachel and Joſeph being deareſt to Jacob, he provided moſt carefully for their ſecurity.

V. 3. *Bowed*, &c.] Still proſecuting his plan of ſatisfying Eſau, that he made no claim to ſecular pre-eminence.

V. 4. *Eſau ran*, &c.] In anſwer to Jacob's prayer, and in accompliſhment of his own promiſes, the Lord had thus influenced and ſoftened Eſau's heart.

V. 5. *The children*, &c. The piety and ſimplicity of this anſwer, to one who was no friend to religion, is moſt worthy of admiration and imitation.

10 And Jacob ſaid, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy ſight, then receive my preſent at my hand: for therefore I have ſeen thy face, as though I had ſeen the face of God, and thou waſt pleaſed with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, my bleſſing that is brought to thee; becauſe God hath dealt graciouſly with me, and becauſe I have enough: and he urged him, and he took *it*.

12 And he ſaid, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13 And he ſaid unto him, My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me; and if men ſhould over-drive them one day, all the flock will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, paſs over before his ſervant: and I will lead on ſoftly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15 And Eſau ſaid, Let me now leave with thee *ſome* of the folk that *are* with me: And he ſaid, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the ſight of my lord.

16 So Eſau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an houſe, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

18 And Jacob came to Shalem a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city.

19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had ſpread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

20 And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Iſrael.

CHAP.

V. 10. *As though*, &c.] Jacob thus denoted the great ſatisfaction he took in this friendly interview; as if it reſembled even the pleaſure of intimate communion with God. We may ſuppoſe this to have been a *proverbial* expreſſion; yet we cannot ſo cordially approve it, as we do the foregoing anſwer: unleſs we ſuppoſe, that in Eſau's conduct he recognized the Lord's ſpecial preſence and favour, in anſwer to his prayers, when he ſaw his face and wreſtled with him. (xxxii, 30.)

V. 12. *I will*, &c.] Eſau thus offered to eſcort Jacob into the land of Seir.

V. 14 *Until I come*, &c.] It is not likely that Jacob intended to ſettle in Seir with his family; nor do we know that he ever paid Eſau a viſit, though we cannot determine that he did not. But upon conſideration, or by divine monition, or ſome change in his circumſtances, he might afterwards alter, or fail of his intention. Or perhaps this was a haſty word extorted by Eſau's importunity, and his own fear of giving offence.

V. 15. *What needeth it?*] Guarded thus far by the angels of God, Jacob neither required nor wiſhed for a guard of ſoldiers. The friendſhip and favour of Eſau was all he required.

V. 17. *Succoth.*] That is, *booths*, or *tents*. This place was on the eaſt ſide of Jordan, before Jacob paſſed that river. After a journey of ſeveral hundred miles, he ſtaid here in ſome temporary habitation a ſhort ſpace, to reſt and refreſh his family and his flocks.

V. 18. *To Shalem*, &c.] This was ſituated on the weſt ſide of Jordan, or after he had croſſed that river. Some tranſlate it, *he came in peace to the city of Shechem.*

V. 20. *El-Elohe Iſrael.*] *The mighty God, the God of Iſrael.* The altar was erected and inſcribed to Him, with whom he had before wreſtled and prevailed, and by whom he had been ſurnamed Iſrael, (*in perpetuam rei memoriam*;) which is an additional diſcovery, who that *Man was*; and an indication what value Jacob put on this new name which he had thus received. (xxxii, 24.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we have poured out our ſouls before the Lord in fervent prayer, we are prepared to meet dangers and difficulties with comfort; and may depend upon, and ſhall ſoon experience, the faithfulneſs of God, in a gracious anſwer. He has various methods of making our enemies to be at peace with us: he can either bind their hands, awe their ſpirits, excite natural affection, or plant ſupernatural grace in their hearts. Yet in all this the Lord works by ſuitable means; and yielding often forms the wiſeſt method of pacifying great offences. This is done by waving points in conteſt, paying all due reſpect, receding from our temporal intereſt; and manifeſting to the conſciences of our opponents that we are ſatisfied with a ſcanty portion, earned by our labour; that we neither envy nor covet their abundance; that we count it more bleſſed to give than to receive; that we conſider ourſelves happy in the Lord's favour, and under his protection; and that we want nothing more than to live with them in peace, and amity, which we much deſire and greatly value. Yet we muſt be careful in ſuch circumſtances that we carry not too far our deſire of pleaſing, or our fear of offending, or profeſs more than conſiſts with piety or ſincerity: nor may we conceal, or be aſhamed of our religion, when in the company of thoſe who fear not God. It is not therefore deſirable to be too intimate with ſuperior ungodly relations, who will expect us to join in, or at leaſt to connive at, *their* vanities: though they diſapprove,

perhaps

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. Dinah's defilement by Shechem, v. 1, 2. *2d. Shechem's love for her, and propoſals of marrying her, v.* 3—12. *3d. The inſidious terms propoſed by Jacob's ſons, v.* 13—17. *4th. The circumciſion of the Shechemites; the murder of them, and the plunder of their city by the ſons of Jacob, v.* 20—29. *5th. Jacob's reproof and complaint, and their reply, v.* 30, 31.

AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, *which* ſhe bare unto Jacob, went out to ſee the daughters of the land.

2 And when Shechem the ſon of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, ſaw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 And his ſoul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damſel, and ſpake kindly unto the damſel.

4 And Shechem ſpake unto his father Hamor, ſaying, Get me this damſel to wife.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter, (now his ſons were with his cattle in the field;) and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the ſons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth: becauſe he had wrought folly in Iſrael, in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, ſaying, The ſoul of my ſon Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

9 And make ye marriages with us, *and* give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 And ye ſhall dwell with us: and the land ſhall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you poſſeſſions therein.

11 And Shechem ſaid unto her father, and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye ſhall ſay unto me I will give.

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perhaps deride our religion; and thus they will either be a ſnare to us, or be offended with us. It is more prudent to keep at a diſtance, and live amongſt ſuch as have leſs aſcendancy, and where we can be more at liberty. Nor ſhould we omit to obſerve, that we ſhall expoſe that to the leaſt hazard which we value moſt and love beſt; we ſhall therefore venture the loſs of all things, rather than endanger the loſs of our ſouls if we know their value, or renounce Chriſt if we truly love him. Nor may we overlook, in Jacob's care, and tender attention to his family and flocks, the good Shepherd of our ſouls, who gathers the lambs in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe with young: whoſe example we all, as parents, teachers, and paſtors, ſhould imitate. Bleſſed be his name, he is ſtill the mighty God, the God of Iſrael: may he who writes, and all who read theſe reflections, be numbered amongſt the true Iſrael of God; that we may record his name, and rejoice in his love, through our pilgrimage here on earth, and for ever in the Canaan above. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *And*, &c.] Dinah ſeems to have been about the age of Joſeph, or rather younger. And as ſome time after Jacob's departure from Shechem, Joſeph being ſeventeen years of age went to his brethren and was ſold by them; ſo Dinah could not at this time be more than fifteen years old; an only daughter, doubtleſs much beloved, and probably too much indulged. Having got acquainted with the daughters of their heathen neighbours, ſhe went to viſit them, probably on ſome public occaſion of mirth and feſtivity, by their invitation; but whether with, or without her parents' conſent, doth not appear.

V. 2. *Took her*, &c.] It does not appear that Shechem uſed force, but rather the arts of ſeduction: and it ſeems that he kept Dinah with him, until ſhe was afterwards taken away by her brethren. (26.)

V. 4. *Get me*, &c.] That is, obtain the conſent of her father.

V. 5. *Jacob*, &c.] Jacob kept ſilence till his ſons returned home; as ſcarcely knowing what to anſwer, or as afraid either of exaſperating the men of Shechem, or taking ſome improper ſtep. Perhaps he had acted more wiſely, if he had taken the management of the buſineſs wholly upon himſelf; inſtead of intruſting it with his ſons, who were raſh and violent, and poſſeſſed too much influence with him.—Nor need we determine whether the covenant made with Jacob would have rendered it totally wrong for him in ſuch circumſtances to have acceded to Shechem's propoſal. However, it ought certainly to have either been flatly refuſed, or fairly accepted.

V. 7. *Were grieved*, &c.] Jacob's ſons were grieved and enraged, probably more on account of the diſgrace of their family, than for the ſin committed againſt God.—What follows ſeems to be the ſentiment of the hiſtorian, who ſpake according to the language of the times when he wrote, to intimate to the Children of Iſrael the inconſiſtency of ſuch practices with their name and profeſſion.

12 Aſk me never ſo much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye ſhall ſay unto me: but give me the damſel to wife.

13 And the ſons of Jacob anſwered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and ſaid, (becauſe he had defiled Dinah their ſiſter:)

14 And they ſaid unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our ſiſter to one that is uncircumciſed: for that were a reproach unto us.

15 But in this will we conſent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be circumciſed;

16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if you will not hearken unto us to be circumciſed, then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleaſed Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's ſon.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, becauſe he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* more honourable than all the houſe of his father.

20 And Hamor and Shechem his ſon came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, ſaying,

21 Theſe men *are* peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only herein will the men conſent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumciſed, as they *are* circumciſed.

23 *Shall* not their cattle, and their ſubſtance, and every beaſt of their's *be* ours? Only let us conſent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his ſon hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city, and every male was circumciſed, all that went out of the gate of his city.

25 And it came to paſs on the third day when they were ſore, that two of the ſons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his ſword, and came upon the city boldly, and ſlew all the males.

26 And they ſlew Hamor and Shechem his ſon with the edge of the ſword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's houſe, and went out.

27 The ſons of Jacob came upon the ſlain, and ſpoiled the city, becauſe they had defiled their ſiſter.

28 They took their ſheep and their oxen, and their aſſes, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field,

29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive,

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V. 12. *Aſk me*, &c.] Shechem was willing to purchaſe the peace and conſent of Dinah's relations upon any terms. Nothing, as matters then ſtood, could have been ſpoken more fairly.

V. 13. *And ſaid, (becauſe*, &c.] Jacob's ſons made Shechem's ſin the excuſe for their own deceitful project.—Probably they at firſt only intended to take the advantage of the foreneſs of the Shechemites to reſcue their ſiſter, in caſe Shechem ſhould refuſe to reſtore her peaceably: but afterwards Simeon and Levi formed and executed a deeper ſcheme of revenge and plunder.

V. 15. *That every male*, &c.] It may be doubted, whether it would have been right to have admitted the Shechemites, who were of the devoted race of Canaan, into the church by the ordinance of circumciſion, upon an intelligent and ſuitable profeſſion of religion: but the very propoſing the performance of this religious ordinance, as a condition of a ſecular advantage, was as inconſiſtent with true piety, as their deceitful intention and after conduct were inconſiſtent with truth, juſtice, and humanity. Yet practices of the ſame nature are ſtill ſhamefully common in the viſible church!

V. 20—24.] The whole conduct of the Shechemites ſhews, that they acted upon the moſt ſelfiſh principles, and ſubmitted to circumciſion without the leaſt regard to its nature, meaning, or divine inſtitution, merely to obtain their own ſecular ends: yet they were much more excuſable in this profanation, than the ſons of Jacob, who put them upon it, and might have been expected to have known better.

V. 25. *Two*, &c.] Simeon and Levi, being ſons of Leah, as well as of Jacob, were Dinah's brethren by the whole blood.—It has, not improbably, been conjectured that they were at that time hoſpitably entertained in Shechem's houſe; which would give them a fairer opportunity of coming upon them when ſore and unawares, and enable them to perform this dreadful execution. Though no more of Jacob's ſons were concerned in the maſſacre, perhaps ſome ſervants might aſſiſt; and it ſeems that all the reſt concurred in the plunder.

V. 29. *All their*, &c.] We are not informed what became of theſe captives afterwards, any more than of the ſervants of Jacob's houſhold: whether they were

tive, and ſpoiled even all that *was* in the houſe.

30 And Jacob ſaid to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to ſtink among the inhabitants of the land, amongſt the Canaanites, and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they ſhall gather themſelves together againſt me, and ſlay me, and I ſhall be deſtroyed, I and my houſe.

31 And they ſaid, Should he deal with our ſiſter as with an harlot?

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1ſt. The Lord commanding Jacob to repair to Bethel, his obedience, and the death of Deborah, v. 1—8. 2d. The Lord's appearance and promiſes to Jacob, and Jacob's worſhip, v. 9—15. 3d. The birth of Benjamin, and death of Rachel, v. 16—20. 4th. Reuben's inceſt with Bilhah, v. 22. 5th. The names of Jacob's ſons, v. 23—26. 6th. Jacob's viſit to Iſaac, and Iſaac's age, death, and burial, v. 27—29.

AND God ſaid unto Jacob, Ariſe, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddeſt from the face of Eſau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob ſaid unto his houſhold, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the ſtrange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments;

3 And

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otherwiſe previouſly diſpoſed of; or whether they went down with Jacob's family into Egypt, though it be not mentioned.

V. 30. *To make me to ſtink*, &c.] Abraham and Iſaac had been reſpected though ſtrangers, and their religion was honoured through the good behaviour of them and their families: but, by this infamous conduct, Jacob apprehended that his ſons would cauſe him, his family, and his religion, to be execrated amongſt the heathen, whoſe crimes they had ſurpaſſed.

V. 31. *And they*, &c.] Thus they vindicated themſelves, and wickedly inſinuated that Jacob was willing to have permitted his daughter to be ſo treated.—After this we read nothing more of Dinah, than her name, and may conclude that ſhe lived and died unmarried, but we hope not impenitent.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Young perſons, eſpecially females, are never ſo ſafe as under the inſpection of prudent and pious parents: their own inexperience and credulity, and the intoxicating nature of flattery, together with the artifice of thoſe who are continually laying ſnares for them, expoſe them to imminent danger. They are therefore their own enemies, if they deſire to go much abroad alone; eſpecially amongſt thoſe who are ſtrangers to God and true religion: but thoſe parents are much more inexcuſable, who allow and encourage their children in ſo doing; nay, who do not interpoſe their authority to prevent them from thus expoſing themſelves heedleſsly to unſeen and unſuſpected danger.—Such indulged, becauſe beloved, children too often, like Dinah, become the ſhame and grief of their parents and families.—And indeed, large families of children, even when trained up in the fear of God, will in general occaſion many trials, anxieties, and ſorrows to their parents; and the grief of loſing them in infancy is tranſient and tolerable, compared with that of ſeeing them grow up and live in wickedneſs. Let parents then rejoice in their children as though they rejoiced not, and ſubmit reſignedly if the Lord bereave them of their beloved offſpring; and if they are ſpared, let them take care to bring them up for the Lord, and commend them to his keeping; and at laſt expect comfort from him, and not from them.—When young women liſten to the vile propoſals or flattering promiſes of ſeducers, they not unfrequently ſeclude themſelves from every proſpect of honourable connexions, and voluntarily conſign themſelves to a future ſingle life, if ſtill worſe conſequences do not enſue: this conſideration ſhould coincide with nobler motives, to induce them to reject with determined indignation and diſdain every overture of that kind.—No ſin is made lighter of by multitudes than lewdneſs: yet no crime is more injurious to the bodies and ſouls of individuals, to the peace and comfort of families, and to the welfare of ſociety; or makes way for more horrible conſequences, as introductory to all other wickedneſs. But how will theſe heathens riſe up in judgment againſt and condemn thouſands, falſely called chriſtians, who having ſeduced and defiled the objects of their pretended affection, afterwards treat them with contempt and hatred; leave them to the infamy and miſery of proſtitution, diſeaſe, and death; and without the leaſt compaſſion for them, or their broken-hearted parents, proceed to add new trophies of their infamous ſucceſs, and to multiply the victims of their unbridled luſts! Surely Shechem was in this more honourable, not only than all the houſe of his father, but than all the reſt of his brethren, the whole tribe of Seducers; who all are in honour and conſcience bound to propoſe and make this only, though inadequate, reparation, though very few of them are willing to do it. Alas! that children, who have profited ſo little by the example and inſtructions of their godly parents, ſhould gain ſuch undue aſcendancy over them! and that they, who expreſs ſo much indignation at the crimes of others, and the folly wrought in Iſrael, ſhould ſhew themſelves ſo unacquainted with the character of an Iſraelite indeed, as far to exceed in their own conduct thoſe crimes which they pretend to puniſh in others! They, who under the pretext of religion, and by profaning its ſacred inſtitutions, can conceal, that they may, without being ſuſpected, execute their purpoſes of atrocious wickedneſs, are the worſt enemies of

3 And let us ariſe, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who anſwered me in the day of my diſtreſs, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the ſtrange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* ear-rings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not purſue after the ſons of Jacob.

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan, (that *is* Beth-el,) he and all the people that *were* with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el: becauſe there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurſe died, and ſhe was buried beneath Beth-el, under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth.

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and bleſſed him.

10 And God ſaid unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name ſhall not be called any more Jacob, but Iſrael ſhall be thy name; and he called his name Iſrael.

11 And God ſaid unto him, *I am* God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations ſhall be of thee: and kings ſhall come out of thy loins.

12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Iſaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed after thee will I give the land.

13 And

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of religion; who cauſe it, and its profeſſors, to be hated and execrated, expoſe them to inward anguiſh and outward perſecution, and open the mouths and harden the hearts of multitudes to their deſtruction.—But they who are wicked enough to perpetrate enormous crimes, will never fail of excuſing and vindicating them; nor will any thing, but the grace of God, or the diſcoveries which the day of judgment will make, effectually ſtop men's mouths, and ſilence their excuſes. Then, however, the impenitent ſinner will find that the crimes of others form no excuſe for his own: and though God may juſtly puniſh thoſe who profane his ordinances, or tranſgreſs his laws, even by the hands of their very tempters; yet theſe ſhall in turn be puniſhed with ſtill greater ſeverity. The good Lord preſerve our families from ſuch crimes and miſeries, and his church from ſuch ſcandals, as this chapter records!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 1. *Ariſe*, &c.] Jacob had hitherto deferred to perform his vow made at Beth-el, and to dedicate the tenth of his ſubſtance to the Lord. Perhaps his afflictions, recorded in the former chapter, were intended to chaſtiſe that delay: but being now reminded by the Lord himſelf, he doubtleſs accompliſhed the whole of his vow; though we are not particularly informed about it.

V. 2. *Put away*, &c.] Theſe *ſtrange* gods were idols worſhipped by thoſe who were *ſtrangers* to the true God and his covenant. Probably the images which Rachel had ſtolen were of that number, and thoſe ſeized among the ſpoil of the Shechemites. Theſe, it ſeems, ſome of the houſhold worſhipped; we hope none but the ſervants and captives.—It is evident that there exiſted ſome rules for external purification before the promulgation of the Moſaic law; (*Exod.* xix. 10—15;) which were deſigned to repreſent the ſanctification of the Spirit, as the ſacrifices prefigured the atonement of Chriſt's death. The abominations recorded in the foregoing chapter, as well as many other evils which ſeem to have prevailed in Jacob's family, much needed ſuch reformation and purification.

V. 4. *They*, &c.] Jacob's family ſeems to have parted with their idols leſs reluctantly than he expected. The ear-rings were probably worn as an amulet, or charm, in token of ſome dependence on, or reſpect for, the ſtrange gods. Theſe Jacob buried in the ground ſecretly, that his family might not know what he had done with them, if they had been diſpoſed to ſeek for them; either from ſuperſtition, or value of the precious metals of which probably they were made.

V. 8. *But Deborah*, &c.] This took place about 125 years after Rebekah's marriage with Iſaac (xxiv. 59.) Probably after Rebekah's death, which is not recorded, this aged ſervant was taken into Jacob's houſe by the deſire of Leah and Rachel, as peculiarly dear to, and reſpected by, them and their family; and thus her death was recorded in Jacob's hiſtory, rather than in Iſaac's. *Allon-Bachuth* ſignifies *the oak of weeping*: for though Deborah was a ſervant and not a relation, now in extreme old age, and probably not only incapable of being uſeful to others, but occaſioning much trouble; yet her good behaviour had ſo engaged the affections of the whole family, that her death was greatly lamented.

V. 10. *He called*, &c.] The Lord thus confirmed to Jacob all the ſpecial favour and protection which the name Iſrael implied.

13 And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.

14 And Jacob ſet up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of ſtone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God ſpake with him, Beth-el.

16 And they journeyed from Beth-el: and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and ſhe had hard labour.

17 And it came to paſs when ſhe was in hard labour, that the midwife ſaid unto her, Fear not; thou ſhalt have this ſon alſo.

18 And it came to paſs as her ſoul was in departing, (for ſhe died,) that ſhe called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Beth-lehem.

20 And Jacob ſet a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

21 And Iſrael journeyed, and ſpread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.

22 And it came to paſs when Iſrael dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Iſrael heard *it*. Now the ſons of Jacob were twelve.

23 The ſons of Leah; Reuben Jacob's firſt-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Iſſachar, and Zebulun.

24 The ſons of Rachel; Joſeph and Benjamin.

25 And the ſons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan and Naphtali.

26 And the ſons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad and Aſher. Theſe *are* the ſons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram.

27 And Jacob came unto Iſaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, (which *is* Hebron,) where Abraham and Iſaac ſojourned.

28 And the days of Iſaac were an hundred and fourſcore years.

29 And Iſaac gave up the ghoſt and died, and was gathered unto his people, *being* old and full of days: and his ſons Eſau and Jacob buried him.

CHAP.

V. 13. *Talked*, &c.] This denotes a perſonal conference, ſuch as had been vouchſafed to Abraham.

V. 14, 15.] Jacob ſeems to have renewed, with more ſolemnity, the ceremony which he obſerved when God firſt met him at Bethel: and confirmed to the place more publicly that name by which he had privately called it, and which it ever after bore; till it became *Beth-aven*, a houſe of vanity and idolatry.

V. 17. *Fear not*, &c.] The midwife, in ſaying, "Thou ſhalt have this ſon alſo," ſeems to have alluded to the name of *Joſeph*, and the occaſion of that name (xxx. 24.)

V. 18. *Her ſoul*, &c.] The expreſſion, "her ſoul was in departing," aptly deſcribes the nature of death, which is the diſſolution of the union betwixt ſoul and body.—Rachel had raſhly ſaid, Give me children, or elſe I die:" God gave her children, and ſhe died in child-birth!—*Benoni* ſignifies *the ſon of my ſorrow.—Benjamin, the ſon of my right-hand.*

V. 22. *Iſrael heard*, &c.] Reuben and Bilhah doubtleſs flattered themſelves that their abominable crime would be concealed, and we may be ſure beſtowed all pains to conceal it: yet Jacob by ſome means was made acquainted with it.

V. 27. *Came unto Iſaac.*] We cannot conclude, from the ſilence of Scripture, that Jacob paid his father only this one viſit; probably he came often to ſee him.

V. 28. *And the days*, &c.] The age, death, and burial of Iſaac, are here inſerted by anticipation; for by computation we find that he did not die till about the time that Joſeph ſtood before Pharaoh. We have ſhewn that Iſaac was about 150 years old when Joſeph was born, Joſeph was therefore 30 when Iſaac was 180. (Note, xxvii. 1.)

V. 29. *Eſau and Jacob buried him.*] Eſau, inſtead of taking this opportunity of murdering Jacob, as he had purpoſed, found his heart ſo influenced, that he amicably aſſiſted at Iſaac's funeral!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Such is the imperfection of the beſt of men, that they are prone to defer thoſe things which they know ought to be done, and which they really intend to do; and to forget the mercies they have received, and the obligations they lie under: nay, without great circumſpection groſs abuſes will find their way even into religious families, eſpecially if they be large. We have need therefore to be reminded of our duty, and even rebuked for neglecting it; and ſhould deem it a very great mercy to be ſtirred up to perſonal or family reformation, and cheerfully part with every thing, however valuable, which proves an occaſion of ſin: but it is as criminal as common, to poſtpone our ſolemn tribute of praiſe to God, when he hath anſwered us in the day of our diſtreſs.—A good example and ſerious admonitions will go a great way in promoting the good behaviour of thoſe around us; and there is often leſs oppoſition to our pious endeavours, than we expected. The Lord deals not with his people and their families according to their deſervings, but is better to them than their fears; and when

CHAP. XXXVI.

Contains, 1st. The account of Esau's wives and children; His removal to Mount Seir, and his descendants in Seir, v. 19. 2d. The descendants of Seir the Horite, &c. v. 20—30. 3d. Kings and dukes of Edom, v. 31—43.

NOW these *are* the generations of Esau, who *is* Edom.

2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite:

3 And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

4 And Adah bare to Esau, Eliphaz: and Bashemath bare Reuel.

5 And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these *are* the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country, from the face of his brother Jacob.

7 For their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and the land wherein they were strangers, could not bear them, because of their cattle.

8 Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau *is* Edom.

9 And these *are* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites, in mount Seir.

10 These *are* the names of Esau's sons, Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.

11 And the sons of Eliphaz were, Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz, Amalek: these *were* the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

13 And these *are* the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.

14 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of

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when he awes the spirits of their enemies, they cannot but be safe whithersoever they go, or wherever they are. When we have obediently hearkened to the Lord's reproving voice, have rectified abuses, and have paid our vows, we may expect to hear from him with comfort, and to enjoy the assurance and earnest of his covenanted blessings. Yet all our consolations in this world only prepare us for trials, and are intermingled with them: and the continual ravages of death, bereaving us of our nearest and best beloved friends and relatives, will frequently excite our fears and lamentations; and remind us to be ready also, and to set our affections on things above.—Nothing is more becoming, than when servants by their good behaviour, merit and obtain the endeared affection of the families in which they reside; and when they live beloved, and die lamented by them. Nor should those masters who have had the benefit of their faithful services, during the time of their health and strength, neglect to provide comfortably for them, when past their labour, if they have it in their power. Such scenes of domestic life are more beautiful and instructive than the events which crowd the page of history with evidences of the madness and folly of mankind.—But we should not too earnestly wish for, or impatiently complain of the want of any temporal object: the Lord may remember our unadvised expressions long after, and rebuke them even by granting our desires, without giving his blessing with them.—How one trial after another often comes upon the favoured servants of the Lord! While we live in the world we must witness so much sin around us, and mourn over so much in ourselves and our families, as well as experience so many bodily infirmities, and outward disappointments; that we may well congratulate, and almost envy, those who have finished their measure of sufferings and services, and leave the world full of days, and ripe for glory: for if we be fit for Heaven, better is the day of our death, than the day of our birth. They who live the most quietly and comfortably are least noticed in history; and it may be some consolation to reflect, that while we read scarcely of any thing else than the vices and miseries of mankind; numbers, unnoticed by man, have walked with God, and are not, for God hath taken them.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI.] V. 2. *Adah*, &c.] She is also called Judith, the daughter of Beeri, (xxvi, 34.) who probably was the same person as Elon; or the one might be Adah's father, and the other her grandfather.

Aholibamah, is also called Bathshemath the daughter of Elon; he probably was her father, and Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, was her mother: Elon might either be the same person as mentioned above, or another of the same name.

V. 3. *Bashemath.*] Called elsewhere Mahalath. Such a variation of names is very common in Scripture.

V. 6. *Went into*, &c.] Probably Esau came frequently to Isaac during his life-time, but after his death he took away all his possessions, and quitted finally the land of Canaan, leaving Jacob unmolested in the prospect of his reversionary inheritance.

Zibeon Eſau's wife: and ſhe bare to Eſau, Jeuſh, and Jaalam, and Korah.

15 Theſe *were* dukes of the ſons of Eſau: the ſons of Eliphaz the firſt-born *ſon* of Eſau; duke Temon, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz,

16 Duke Korah, duke Gatam, *and* duke Amalek: Theſe *are* the dukes *that came* of Eliphaz, in the land of Edom: theſe *were* the ſons of Adah.

17 And theſe *are* the ſons of Reuel Eſau's ſon; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah. Theſe *are* the dukes *that came* of Reuel, in the land of Edom: theſe *are* the ſons of Baſhemath Eſau's wife.

18 And theſe *are* the ſons of Aholibamah Eſau's wife: duke Jeuſh, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: theſe *were* the dukes *that came* of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah Eſau's wife.

19 Theſe *are* the ſons of Eſau (who *is* Edom), and theſe *are* their dukes.

20 Theſe *are* the ſons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

21 And Diſhon, and Ezer, and Diſhan: theſe *are* the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 And the children of Lotan were, Hori, and Heman: and Lotan's ſiſter *was* Timnah.

23 And the children of Shobal *were* theſe; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

24 And theſe *are* the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this *was that* Anah that found the mules in the wilderneſs, as he fed the aſſes of Zibeon his father.

25 And the children of Anah *were* theſe: Diſhon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 And theſe *are* the children of Diſhon; Hemdan, and Eſhban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

27 The children of Ezer *are* theſe; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Achan.

28 The children of Diſhan *are* theſe: Uz, and Aran.

29 Theſe *are* the dukes *that came* of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah,

30 Duke Diſhon, duke Ezer, duke Diſhan: theſe *are* the dukes *that came* of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

31 And theſe *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Iſrael.

32 And Bela the ſon of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

33 And Bela died, and Jobab the ſon of Zerah of Bozran reigned in his ſtead.

34 And Jobab died, and Huſham of the land of Temani reigned in his ſtead.

35 And Huſham died, and Hadad the ſon of Bedad (who ſmote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his ſtead: and the name of his city *was* Avith.

36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Maſrekah reigned in his ſtead.

37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth *by* the river reigned in his ſtead.

38 And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the ſon of Achbor reigned in his ſtead.

39 And Baal-hanan the ſon of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his ſtead: and the name of his city *was* Pau; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 And theſe *are* the names of the dukes *that came* of Eſau, according to their families, after

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V. 15. *Dukes.*] Military leaders, who frequently were contemporaries.

V. 20. *The ſons of Seir the Horite.*] Theſe were the former inhabitants of that country, with whom probably the deſcendants of Eſau intermarried, and were incorporated.

V. 24. *Found the mules.*] Probably in keeping the aſſes he diſcovered the method of breeding mules, by the unnatural copulation of the diſtinct ſpecies of horſes and aſſes.

V. 31. *Theſe are the kings,* &c.] Theſe kings reigned in ſucceſſion over the whole country; before there was any king over the Iſraelites.

V. 40. *Names of the dukes.*] Theſe appear to have been eminent military leaders under the kings of Edom. Some parts of this chapter ſeem to have been added, long after the times of Moſes: probably by the writers of the Books of Chronicles. (1 Chron. 1.)

V. 43.

after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth,

41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

42 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar,

43 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these *be* the dukes of Edom according to their habitations, in the land of their possessions; he *is* Esau the father of the Edomites.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob sojourning in Canaan, Joseph loved by him, but hated by his brethren, and his dreams, with their interpretation and effect, v. 1—11. 2d. Joseph going to see his brethren, who counselled to slay him; at Reuben's desire cast into a pit, and afterwards sold to the Ishmeelites, with Reuben's lamentation at not finding him, v. 12—30. 3d. His coat covered with blood sent to Jacob, with his embittered grief at his supposed death, v. 31—35. 4th. Joseph brought to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, v. 36.

AND Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the generations of Jacob: Joseph *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours.

4 And

V. 43. *Their possessions.*] The descendants of Esau were settled in possession of the land of Seir; whilst Israel had his inheritance only in reversion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The registers in this Chapter *are recorded* to evince the faithfulness of God to his promise to Abraham; "Nations "shall come of thee:" to shew the accomplishment of his prophetical information to Rebekah; "Two nations "are in thy womb:" and the blessing to Esau; "By thy "sword shalt thou live." They might also be many ways useful to the children of Israel. Yet they are but mere registers, and very different from the particular history of the heirs of promise; who have the best place, and the highest character in the book of God, though not in many other books. However men may struggle against the purpose of God, it will stand; they will finally see it necessary to give place to it; and God hath many ways of inducing them to it. He often gives ungodly people a large portion of this world; and, satisfied with it, they leave others to possess and enjoy spiritual blessings unenvied, and unmolested. This is *Edom:* still the same profane despiser of heavenly things, as when he sold his birth-right; though not the same malicious persecutor, as when he vowed Jacob's destruction.—Yet he and such as he look great, become dukes and princes, and are envied and courted; whilst the Israel of God are poor, obscure, and despised! But the tables will be turned presently: the wicked shall soon be cut down, and wither as the grass; while the righteous shall flourish as the cedar in Libanus: and having *their* good things, when those of the sinner are spent and gone, they shall have them durably, yea eternally. Let us then seek an interest in these blessings; and not covet, envy, or glory in those fading distinctions, which are so often lavished upon the enemies of God, and the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVII.] V. 1. *Jacob dwelt*, &c.] Jacob was contented to continue a stranger in Canaan, both whilst his father lived, and after Esau had got possessions, and exercised lordship in Seir.

V. 2. *These are*, &c.] By *the generations of Jacob*, we may understand the history of him, and of his family. The inspired writer had done with Esau, except as he came in his way, when treating of the affairs of Israel: he had joined himself to the heathen, let him be numbered among them.—But of Jacob and the chosen seed he hath much to record.—Joseph, though much beloved, was not trained up delicately and in sloth, but inured to labour. They, who are brought up otherwise, are truly called *spoiled children*, for they are not likely to be worth much. He accompanied the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, particularly assisting them in their pastoral employments: and he brought unto their father their evil report, in order that the crimes which he could not prevent, might be reproved and repressed by Jacob's authority.

V. 3. *Son of*, &c.] Joseph was the main comfort of Jacob's old age after the loss of Rachel: but as he was several years older than Benjamin, and not much younger than several of Jacob's other sons, it might perhaps be translated, *the son of Eders, or of the aged*, as descriptive of his gravity and piety, far above his years; a Hebrew phrase similar to "*sons of Belial*," and many others. Jacob clothed him in a *coat of colours*; the word *many* not being in the original: a garment more beautiful than what the others wore; which was intended as a token of peculiar

4 And when his brethren ſaw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not ſpeak peaceably unto him.

5 And Joſeph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he ſaid unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed.

7 For behold, we *were* binding ſheaves in the field, and lo, my ſheaf aroſe, and alſo ſtood upright; and behold, your ſheaves ſtood round about, and made obeiſance to my ſheaf.

8 And his brethren ſaid unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or ſhalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and ſaid, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and behold, the ſun and the moon, and the eleven ſtars made obeiſance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and ſaid unto him, What *is* this dream that thou haſt dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourſelves to thee, to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him: but his father obſerved the ſaying.

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will ſend thee unto them. And he ſaid unto him, Here *am I.*

14 And he ſaid to him, Go, I pray thee, ſee whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he ſent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 And a certain man found him, and behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man aſked him, ſaying, What ſeekeſt thou?

16 And he ſaid, I ſeek my brethren: tell me, I pay thee, where they feed *their flocks.*

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peculiar regard; but ſeems to have been an invidious and injudicious diſtinction.

V. 4. *When his brethren ſaw*, &c.] The preference, manifeſted to Joſeph, excited the envy of his brethren; and the ground of that preference, even his wiſdom and piety, called forth their enmity. Conſcious of his ſuperior excellency, and hating him for it, they conſidered the approbation of *his* conduct as a reproach of *their's*; all which was augmented by his reporting their evil deeds.—In this Joſeph was a type of Chriſt, the beloved of the Father, who was on that account envied and hated by the Jews, and by the world; not only, notwithſtanding his excellency, but *for it*, as it reproached and expoſed their hypocriſy and wickedneſs; and becauſe he alſo teſtified of them, that their works were evil. This was the effect of the old enmity put between the Seed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent.

V. 5. *Joſeph*, &c.] God, by ſupernatural dreams, gave Joſeph a pre-intimation of his future greatneſs, to prepare him for his previous trials, and to ſupport him under them. Thus Chriſt "for the joy ſet before him endured the croſs;" and chriſtians are prepared by the hope and earneſt of heaven for their ſufferings on earth.—Mr. Henry obſerves, 'that he dreamed of his preferment but not of his 'impriſonment; as young people are apt to dream of 'proſperity, but think nothing of affliction.'

V. 6. *Hear I pray you*, &c.] Probably by ſome inward impulſe Joſeph was led to tell theſe prophetical dreams. It was on many accounts proper they ſhould be known; though otherwiſe it would have been impolitic for him to have declared them.

V. 7, 8.] Joſeph's brethren rightly interpreted the dream, though they abhorred the interpretation: and whilſt they ſpared no pains, and ventured upon the moſt atrocious crimes, to defeat it, they were themſelves the inſtruments of it's accompliſhment.--Thus the Jews underſtood Chriſt's parable, and the intimations he gave of his kingdom: but determining that he ſhould not reign over *them*, they conſulted to put him to death; and by his crucifixion actually made way for that exaltation, which they intended to prevent.

V. 10, 11.] Perhaps Jacob meant to abate the indignation of his other ſons; yet it is evident that he thought there was ſomething ſupernatural in Joſeph's dream.—Rachel, the mother of Joſeph, was dead, but Leah ſeems to have been ſtill alive: it may, however, mean only the whole family, with peculiar reference to the number of his brethren.

V. 12. *In Shechem.*] This was at leaſt forty miles from Hebron, where Jacob at preſent reſided.—They probably went thither for the ſake of better paſture.

V. 14. *Whether it be well*, &c.] After the wickedneſs which Jacob's ſons had perpetrated upon the Shechemites, it is more wonderful that they ſhould venture thither, than that he ſhould be anxious for their ſafety. He ſuſpected not ſuch deep enmity in their hearts, as they actually entertained, or he would not thus have expoſed his favourite ſon.—But the hand of the Lord was in it.

V. 15. *Wandering.*] Having loſt his way, or traverſing the country from place to place ſeeking his brethren.

17 And the man ſaid, They are departed hence: for I heard them ſay, Let us go to Dothan. And Joſeph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they ſaw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conſpired againſt him, to ſlay him.

19 And they ſaid one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us ſlay him, and caſt him into ſome pit; and we will ſay, Some evil beaſt hath devoured him: and we ſhall ſee what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and ſaid, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben ſaid unto them, Shed no blood, *but* caſt him into this pit that *is* in the wilderneſs, and lay no hand upon him, that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 And it came to paſs when Joſeph was come unto his brethren, that they ſtript Joſeph out of his coat, his coat of *many* colours that *was* on him.

24 And they took him, and caſt him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25 And they ſat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Iſhmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing ſpicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah ſaid unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we ſlay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us ſell him to the Iſhmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our brother, and our fleſh: and his brethren were content.

28 Then there paſſed by Midianites merchant-men; and they drew and lift up Joſeph out of the pit, and ſold Joſeph to the Iſhmeelites for twenty *pieces* of ſilver: and they brought Joſeph into Egypt.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joſeph *was* not in the pit: and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and ſaid, The child *is* not; and I, whither ſhall I go?

31 And they took Joſeph's coat and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood.

32 And they ſent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and ſaid, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy ſon's coat or no.

V. 18. *Saw him*, &c.] (Luke xx. 14, 15.)

V. 19. *Behold this dreamer*, &c.] Thus Jeſus, upon the croſs, was ſcornfully reproached with his pretenſions to be the Chriſt the King of Iſrael.

V. 20. *Come now*, &c.] Theſe unnatural children had no more compaſſion for their father than for Joſeph: nay perhaps they ſecretly enjoyed the pleaſure of diſappointing and grieving him; for they typified thoſe who ſaw and hated both Chriſt and his Father: and all the enmity borne to the children of God, becauſe they reſemble, and are beloved of him, is only an expreſſion of enmity to God himſelf.

V. 21. *Reuben*, &c.] We not long ſince read that Reuben was guilty of ſuch fornication, as is not ſo much as named among the Gentiles; yet here he oppoſed another kind of wickedneſs: human depravity runs in different channels; ſome are more prone to one ſin, ſome to another.

V. 22. *Caſt him into this pit*, &c.] Reuben ſpake as if he meant that Joſeph ſhould there be left to ſtarve; but he purpoſed to reſtore him to his father, hoping probably by that ſervice to recover his favour. Thus Joſeph, murdered in the intention of his brethren, and as it were buried in the pit, yet preſerved in order to his exaltation, was a type of Chriſt crucified, buried, riſen, and glorified.

V. 25. *Iſhmeelites.*] The deſcendants of Iſhmael, Midian, (28.) and other ſons of Abraham, (who were grown into a multitude, whilſt the deſcendants of the promiſed Iſaac were few in number,) uniting together, engaged in this traffic.

V. 28. *Sold Joſeph*, &c.] Thus Chriſt was ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver, and by a Judas, or Judah; the ſame name with him, who propoſed the ſale of Joſeph: and, conſidering the difference of coins, it might be alſo for juſt the ſame ſum.

V. 29. *Reuben*, &c.] Reuben was abſent when the plan of ſelling Joſeph had been propoſed, agreed upon, and executed: yet he never diſcloſed, that we find, what he knew of this buſineſs to his father; for fear, perhaps, of drawing down the reſentment of the reſt upon himſelf.

V. 32. *Thy ſon's coat*, &c.] Not our brother's, or Joſeph's coat, but thy ſon's; as if, even in this cruel impoſition, they would reproach their father for his partiality to Joſeph, and almoſt inſinuate that Joſeph alone was conſidered as a ſon.

33 And he knew it, and ſaid, *It is* my ſon's coat; an evil beaſt hath devoured him: Joſeph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put ſackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his ſon many days.

35 And all his ſons and all his daughters roſe up to comfort him; but he refuſed to be comforted; and he ſaid, For I will go down into the grave unto my ſon, mourning: Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites ſold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

CHAP.

V. 34. *Rent his clothes, and put*, &c.] This was in thoſe ages and countries the cuſtomary indication of great ſorrow; and implied an humiliation before God for ſin, as the cauſe of affliction.

V. 35. *His daughters.*] Not only Dinah, but his ſons' wives, (for many of them were at that time married,) joined in endeavouring to comfort Jacob.

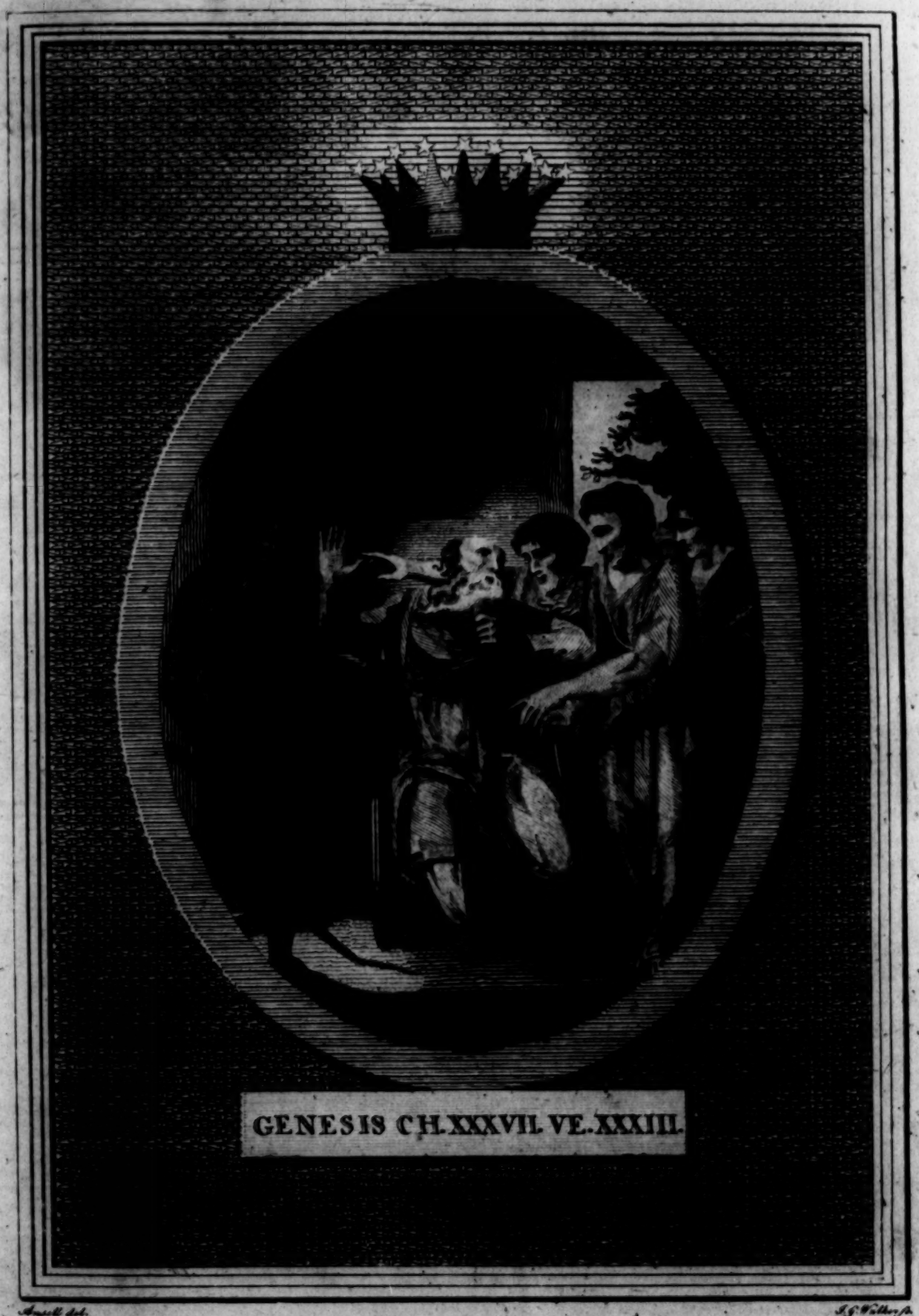
His ſons ſeem to have rather relented, when they witneſſed his exceſſive ſorrow: yet not ſo as to confeſs their evil deeds, or betray one another; though Jacob's grief might thereby have been abated, and probable meaſures taken for recovering Joſeph.

Thus his father wept for him.] Immoderately, and without proper reſignation to the will of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who hate to be reformed, hate alſo to be reproved, and are offended with thoſe who expoſe them to reproof: and though it is often of important advantage to diſcover the ſecret crimes which men commit, to thoſe who are authoriſed to reprove and reſtrain them; yet nothing requires more prudence and candour: nor ſhould it ever be done out of reſentment, or without urgent occaſion; but always from hatred of the ſin, and love to the ſinner; and with reluctancy, as expecting nothing but unpleaſant conſequences to ourſelves.—In the preſent ſtate of things there will be contentions amongſt brethren, eſpecially thoſe of oppoſite characters; and parents ought certainly to manifeſt their preference of ſuch as behave with the greateſt piety and prudence: yet even this will excite the enmity and envy of thoſe who are proud and ungodly. Great care ought therefore to be taken not to inflame theſe malignant paſſions by ſuch diſtinctions as are uſeleſs and invidious. Much of that wiſdom, which is from above, will be neceſſary in this reſpect, to avoid ſowing thoſe ſeeds of diſcord that will not ſpeedily be eradicated: for when once malice and envy have got poſſeſſion of the heart, every circumſtance enhances them; love ſhewn to the perſon envied, is conſidered as hatred to the envious man; kindneſs to the one ſeems injuſtice to the other, and commendation, reproach; yea the very excellency of a man's character and conduct makes him the more odious to ſuch perſons. Theſe paſſions, when once full grown, break through every tie of nature, every obligation of duty, and every reſtraint of conſcience and compaſſion: and if grafted upon that enmity, which is in the ſeed of the ſerpent againſt the ſeed of the woman, upon religious enmity and the ſpirit of perſecution, they produce the moſt atrocious crimes, which are not attended with the leaſt remorſe or reluctance.—But though the Lord knows that the tokens of his favour, and that honour which comes from him, will excite theſe diabolical diſpoſitions, and inflame them more and more; yet he will not, on that account, withold them: nay he will rather confer ſuch favours, purpoſely to evidence the malignity and force of theſe vile affections, either for the ſinner's future conviction and humiliation, or to manifeſt his own juſtice in his condemnation. He knows how to make the wrath of man to praiſe him, and to reſtrain the remainder of it: he can check and moderate the force of men's paſſions, work upon their humanity or natural affection, excite horror or terror in their minds, or even let looſe ſelfiſhneſs, covetouſneſs, or fear of man to counteract the effects of malice and revenge: ſo that, in direct oppoſition to their own intention, his enemies ſhall juſt go far enough to accompliſh his purpoſes, and to defeat their own; and to promote the benefit and advancement of believers which they meant to hinder:—If the Lord ever now does, (as he frequently did in former ages,) give previous intimations of what he intends to do for and by his ſervants, it muſt be conſidered as equivalent to an aſſurance of many preparatory trials: for before honour is humility; and without ſevere diſcipline the hearts of the beſt of men are ſeldom ſufficiently humbled, for ſuitably filling up important ſtations of uſefulneſs.—Scarcely any thing can be baſer than for children to inſult, and torture the heart, of a parent, whoſe main fault conſiſts in having too much indulged them; yet in this common caſe, though the conduct of the child be vile, the appointment of God is wiſe and righteous.—The more we love earthly objects, the greater affliction we are thereby expoſed to; and impatient mourning for their loſs too plainly proves the exceſs of our affection, and the need there was of the ſalutary ſtroke: yet our ſorrow would often ceaſe, and be turned into joy, if we knew all the truth. In faith reſting ſatisfied that though we know not now what the Lord is doing, yet we ſhall both know and approve hereafter; we ſhould comfort ourſelves under ſevere trials, and not determine raſhly and *falſely*, to go down mourning to the grave, (xlv. 28. xlviii. 11). As we know not what we, or our's may come to before we die, it is good to habituate ourſelves to labour, ſelf-denial, and ſubmiſſion.—When men are bent upon wickedneſs, they will never want ſome ſtratagem to effect, and ſome pretext to conceal it: but however unanimous they may be in hiding their ſins, they will at laſt be brought to light to their confuſion.

But let us in all this behold Jeſus, hated, envied, perſecuted, ſold, and ſuffering for us; yea in ſome ſenſe by us: for we are like-minded in ourſelves by nature, to thoſe who crucified him; and our ſins were the real cauſes of thoſe ſufferings, which made way for his mediatorial exaltation. Thus whilſt we were enemies, proviſion was ma-



GENESIS CH.XXXVII. VE.XXXIII.

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CHAP. XXXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Judah's marriage and children by his wife, v. 1—5. 2d. His ſon Er's marriage and death, v. 6—7. 3d. Onan's marriage to his brother's widow; his miſbehaviour and death, v. 8—10. 4th. Tamar, the widow, preſerved for Shelah, v. 11. 5th. The death of Judah's wife, his inceſt with Tamar, it's diſcovery to his confuſion, and the fruit of it in two ſons, v. 12—30.

AND it came to paſs at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whoſe name *was* Hirah.

2 And Judah ſaw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whoſe name *was* Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.

3 And ſhe conceived and bare a ſon; and he called his name Er.

4 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſhe called his name Onan.

5 And ſhe yet again conceived, and bare a ſon; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when ſhe bare him.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firſt-born, whoſe name *was* Tamar.

7 And Er, Judah's firſt-born, was wicked in the ſight of the LORD; and the LORD ſlew him.

8 And Judah ſaid unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raiſe up ſeed to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the ſeed ſhould not be his: and it came to paſs, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he ſpilled *it* on the ground, leſt that he ſhould give ſeed to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did diſpleaſed the LORD: wherefore he ſlew him alſo.

11 Then ſaid Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's houſe, till Shelah my ſon be grown; (for he ſaid, Leſt peradventure he die alſo as his brethren *did:)* and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's houſe.

12 And in proceſs of time, the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died: and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his ſheep-ſhearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, ſaying, Behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath, to ſhear his ſheep.

14 And ſhe put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herſelf, and ſat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath: for ſhe ſaw that

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for our periſhing neceſſity, when we were made ſenſible of it: and he waits his opportunity of overcoming evil with good. Whilſt we receive from his fulneſs daily, let us not forget the anguiſh of his ſoul, when ſuffering for our ſins, that we may mourn for our crimes, and crucify his crucifiers; and that we may love and ſerve him, and through envy, reproach and tribulation follow him to glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII. V. 1, 2.] The inſpired hiſtorian breaks off the thread of his narration to relate ſome other domeſtic occurrences, which about the ſame time took place in Jacob's family; and were doubtleſs an additional cauſe of great grief to the aged Patriarch.—Though Judah and his brethren ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the marriage of Dinah with an uncircumciſed perſon; yet he, and probably all the reſt, married wives from among them.—Judah, though very young, married, as it ſeems, without Jacob's advice or conſent, at the inſtance of his Canaanitiſh friend.

V. 7. *Was wicked*, &c.] Er was wicked in the ſight of the Lord; but perhaps he was not ſo in the ſight of man, from whom he contrived to conceal his crimes. The Lord, however, was ſo provoked at his ſecret ſins, that he ſlew him. Many premature deaths might probably be accounted for in the ſame manner, had we as impartial and well-informed hiſtorians to record them.

V. 8. *Go in*, &c.] The cuſtom of marrying a brother's widow, when he died childleſs, ſeems to have been a traditional, before it became a written law; and the firſt born from ſuch marriages was accounted the child of the deceaſed, was adopted into his family, and became his heir.

V. 9, 10.] Onan's conduct was not only unnatural and deteſtable in itſelf, but full of envy and malice; and not without ſomething of the nature of murder in it: for the ſame principle would have induced him to have murdered a child born to him, but accounted his brother's; if he had been tempted, and could have done it with impunity.

V. 11. *Leſt peradventure*, &c.] Perhaps Judah, being ignorant of the real cauſe of his ſon's death, attributed it to ſome ill-behaviour of Tamar, and therefore ſecretly determined not to marry Shelah to her: but he put the matter off, by intimating that he was too young, and he ſhould wait a little longer, before he allowed them to marry.

V. 14. *And ſhe was not*, &c.] Tamar could not think this a probable way of forwarding her marriage with Shelah:

that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law:) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

17 And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock: And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it?*

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand: and he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the man of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way-side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

23 And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also behold, she *is* with child by whoredom: And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

25 When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these *are*, *am I* with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son: and he knew her again no more.

27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold twins *were* in her womb.

28 And

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lah; but she probably perceived that Judah never intended it: and yet it is difficult to assign a reason for her laying this snare for her father-in-law. Some conjecture that being proselyted to the true religion, she was desirous of being brought into the line of Christ's ancestors, and, from that motive, of having children by some of Jacob's family; and perhaps some intimation had been given that our Lord should spring from Judah; therefore not expecting to be married to Shelah, she saw no other way but drawing in Judah to lie with her. If these were her motives, though they by no means excuse her conduct, which must be ascribed to her ignorance, she certainly obtained her end; for Christ was descended from her by this very incestuous intercourse!

V. 18. *Signet, bracelets, and staff.*] These were probably of considerable value, and would afford Tamar an opportunity of exposing Judah; yet he was so infatuated as to entrust them with a supposed common prostitute!

V. 21. *Where is the harlot?*] By this circumstance, and by Tamar's covering her face, we learn that these practices were neither so common, nor so shameless amongst these Canaanites, as they now are amongst nominal christians. We shall not easily find a place, of which it can now truly be said, there is no harlot here.

V. 23. *Lest we be shamed*, &c.] For the whoredom, and the folly connected with it.

V. 24 *Bring her*, &c.] Some suppose that Judah only meant to brand Tamar with a mark of infamy: if he meant to burn her to death, in her present situation, it shows not only that he considered her as betrothed to Shelah, and an adulteress; but also that he was actuated by an undue severity, and dislike to Tamar. In those days the injured party seems to have often been both accuser, judge, and executioner; as in the case of murder, the nearest relation was the avenger of blood.

V. 25. *Discern, I pray thee*, &c.] He, who had been the adviser in the sale of Joseph, and in sending his coat to Jacob, with this taunting message, "Know now whether this be thy son's coat or no;" was at length taunted in a similar manner, "Discern, I pray thee, whose *these* are."

V. 26. *More righteous than I*, &c.] Judah had *intentionally* committed only fornication, while Tamar had been guilty of incest: yet conscious of his being the occasion of her crime, by withholding Shelah; and condemned in his conscience for the harsh sentence which he had uttered against her, and perhaps being truly penitent, he condemned himself more than her; and knew her again no more. Nor do we find, though he was yet young, that he married again.

V. 27—30.] By an hard labour Tamar was corrected for her crime; yet from these twins descended almost the whole

28 And it came to paſs when ſhe travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a ſcarlet thread, ſaying, This came out firſt.

29 And it came to paſs as he drew back his hand, that behold his brother came out; and ſhe ſaid, How haſt thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.

30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the ſcarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zara.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Reſumes the hiſtory of Joſeph, and contains, 1ſt. His being bought by Potiphar, and preferred in his family, v. 1—6. 2d. Tempted by his miſtreſs to adultery, but victorious over the temptation, v. 7—13. 3d. Accuſed falſely by her, and impriſoned by his maſter, v. 14—20. 4th. Comforted of the Lord, and favoured and advanced by the keeper of the priſon, v. 20—23.

AND Joſeph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Iſhmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the LORD was with Joſeph, and he was a proſperous man: and he was in the houſe of his maſter the Egyptian.

3 And his maſter ſaw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to proſper in his hand.

4 And Joſeph found grace in his ſight, and he

whole tribe of Judah; from whom the whole nation are to this day called Jews, or Judeans; and who had little cauſe to boaſt, that they were not born of fornication. Some make the circumſtances of this birth emblematical of the Jews and Gentiles: the Jews, like Zarah, ſeemed marked for priority in the church of Chriſt, yet they drew back; and the Gentiles, like Pharez, have got the birth-right: yet in due time they ſhall alſo regain admiſſion, and ſhare the ſame privileges.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Alas! what a melancholy view do theſe records give us of the ſtate of Jacob's family, of the troubles which he had with his children, and of the ſtate of religion in the then viſible church of God!—Is this Judah, "whom his "brethren ſhall praiſe?" Rather let us praiſe God for his patience with him; and that where ſin had abounded, grace, as we hope, much more abounded in his ſalvation. The friendſhip of thoſe, who will encourage and flatter young perſons, and aſſiſt them in gratifying their licentious inclinations, is often much valued by them, and their company courted and preferred before that of pious friends and relations: but it corrupts good manners, and makes bad worſe.—Though, all things conſidered, it is beſt for *moſt* men to marry early in life; yet ſurely not when they are incapable of judging for themſelves, and will not be counſelled, or directed by their parents and friends; but are led by thoſe who fear not God, into connections with others of the ſame ſtamp.—Too often parents lead their children into the ſame miſtakes and ſins, of which they themſelves have been guilty, and are inſtrumental in their ruin temporal and eternal.—The Lord ſometimes makes ſpeedy work in executing judgment on young ſinners, in order to prevent the abuſe of his patience in his dealings with others. The Scriptures ſparingly hint at thoſe vile practices, which, though done in ſecret, are a ſhame to be ſpoken of: this is to ſhow that the Lord notices, abhors, and will bring to light every ſecret ſin, and eſpecially all the laſciviouſneſs of heart and life, which it is to be feared millions live in, who ſtand fair in the world's eſteem: then ſhall the ſecret hiſtory of every individual (who hath not truly repented, and waſhed away his ſins in the blood of Chriſt), written with an impartial pen, be publiſhed to the world of men and angels; every mouth ſhall then be ſtopped; and God's righteouſneſs in the condemnation of ſinners be manifeſted to the whole univerſe. Mirth, feaſting, and vain company, furniſh fuel to licentious inclinations, and opportunity inflames the heart: then intereſt, credit, and conſcience are ſacrificed, and the wiſeſt of men act as if bereft of common ſenſe: for wine and whoredom take away the heart, and ſtupify the conſcience.—What need have we then to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation! Unthought-of conſequences will ſoon prove the folly of thoſe who give licence to their luſts; and they, who fear ſhame before men more than condemnation before God, often find the very thing come upon them which they feared, notwithſtanding all their care to prevent it. Injurious ſuſpicions and unjuſt treatment, frequently drive thoſe to evil practices, who were not previouſly diſpoſed to them: but miſerable and infatuated beyond expreſſion are they, who barter chaſtity, reputation, and even their ſouls, for the paltry reward of ſin. Nor are any more hardened againſt compaſſion, or more diſpoſed to treat others with unrelenting ſeverity, than they who are moſt indulgent to themſelves, and hardened in unrepented wickedneſs. Yet it is hopeful, when being put to ſhame before men produces inward conviction of guilt, humiliating confeſſions, and renunciation of ſin never more to return to it. But whilſt we compaſſionate pious Jacob, thus wounded on every ſide by the miſconduct of his family; let us admire the ſovereign purpoſe and grace of God, who by all theſe events was preparing for the manifeſtation of his Son in human nature. Our Redeemer ſprang from Judah by Tamar, and from Pharez; for his excellency was perſonal; and, though ſinleſs, it

he ſerved him: and he made him overſeer over his houſe, and all *that* he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to paſs from the time that he had made him overſeer in his houſe, and over all that he had, that the LORD bleſſed the Egyptian's houſe for Joſeph's ſake, and the bleſſing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in the houſe, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joſeph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, ſave the bread which he did eat: and Joſeph was *a* goodly *perſon*, and well favoured.

7 And it came to paſs after theſe things, that his maſter's wife caſt her eyes upon Joſeph; and ſhe ſaid, Lie with me.

8 But he refuſed, and ſaid unto his maſter's wife, Behold, my maſter wotteth not what *is* with me in the houſe, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.

9 *There is* none greater in this houſe than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, becauſe thou *art* his wife: how then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?

10 And it came to paſs as ſhe ſpake to Joſeph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her.

11 And it came to paſs about this time, that *Joſeph* went into the houſe to do his buſineſs; and *there was* none of the men of the houſe there within.

ſuited the end of his appearance, to be made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIX. V. 2—4.] Joſeph was not only favoured with the comforting preſence of the Lord, and with ſeaſons of peculiarly ſweet communion with him: but he was ſo remarkably furniſhed with wiſdom from above, and proſpered in all his undertakings, that it was evident even to Potiphar himſelf, that the Lord was with him, aſſiſting, and ſucceeding him. Thus becoming uſeful, though a ſlave, he was had in reputation; and he abode in the houſe well ſatisfied: and keeping cloſe to his work, he became a favourite with his maſter, who greatly countenanced and confided in him.

V. 5. *He had made him overſeer*, &c.] Conſidering Potiphar's rank, it is not probable that Joſeph was preferred to ſo important a ſtation, till his ability and fidelity had been fully proved. Near thirteen years elapſed, from the time when he was ſold into Egypt, to that of his ſtanding before Pharaoh. Some years he was confined in priſon; but probably more elapſed during his continuance in Potiphar's family, previous to his impriſonment; where he would have large opportunity of acquiring that kind of knowledge and addreſs, which his future elevated ſtation required. In this ſtation the Lord bleſſed him; ſo that there was a remarkable change for the better: every body noticed that all affairs were better conducted, and had a more proſperous event.

V. 6. *And he left all*, &c.] Having increaſing confidence in his fidelity, integrity, prudence, and good ſucceſs.

V. 7. *Lie with me*, &c.] The diſparity in rank betwixt Potiphar's wife and Joſeph, and the obſervation of his modeſty as equal to his other virtues, probably made her deſpair of inveigling him by diſtant hints: and conſidering how much it was his intereſt to oblige her, and how dangerous to offend her; as ſhe was hurried on by the violence of her criminal paſſions, ſhe was not aſhamed to addreſs him in ſo impudent a manner, not much fearing a repulſe.

V. 8—10.] Attending to the circumſtances before mentioned, and conſidering Joſeph as a ſingle man, in the vigour of youth; with the importunity with which he was aſſaulted, and the opportunity and privacy afforded him, we cannot too much admire this glorious victory of chaſtity; the power of divine grace diſplayed in it; and the excellency of him, who was hated of his brethren. And comparing his conduct with that of Judah, Reuben, and other of Jacob's ſons, we muſt allow that he had juſtly the preference in his father's eſteem.—Nor was this refuſal more worthy of admiration, than the manner of it: the calmneſs of his ſpirit, the force of his arguments, the generoſity and delicacy, as well as piety of his ſentiment, are moſt beautiful.—His maſter's kindneſs to him, the honourable ſtation which he held in his family, the peculiar relation in which his tempter ſtood to his generous benefactor, the greatneſs of the injuſtice and ingratitude to him, which would be in ſuch a conduct; but above all, the greatneſs of the wickedneſs in the ſight of God, whoſe authority and diſpleaſure he was not aſhamed to mention to this adulterous woman: theſe are the topics, which he inſiſted upon; and had not her vile paſſions ſtupified and hardened her heart, ſurely ſhe muſt have been reclaimed, or even converted to his God and to his religion, which he ſo adorned and recommended by his conduct.—Whilſt ſhe aſſailed him day by day continually, doubtleſs Satan, as far as permitted, would paint to his imagination in lively colours the advantages of compliance, and the conſequences of refuſal: but all in vain; for the grace of our Lord was ſufficient for him. So that when he found her deaf to the calls of duty, conſcience, gratitude, honour, and the fear of God, and that he could not reclaim her, he avoided her company as much as poſſible; being diſtruſtful of himſelf, and fearful of being overcome, if he parleyed with the temptation.

12 And

12 And ſhe caught him by his garment, ſaying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to paſs, when ſhe ſaw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That ſhe called unto the men of her houſe, and ſpake unto them, ſaying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice.

15 And it came to paſs, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And ſhe laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And ſhe ſpake unto him according to theſe words, ſaying, The Hebrew ſervant which thou haſt brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me.

18 And it came to paſs, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to paſs, when his maſter heard the words of his wife, which ſhe ſpake unto him, ſaying, After this manner did thy ſervant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joſeph's maſter took him, and put him into the priſon, a place where the king's priſoners *were* bound: and he was there in the priſon.

21 But the LORD was with Joſeph, and ſhewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the ſight of the keeper of the priſon.

22 And the keeper of the priſon committed to Joſeph's hand all the priſoners that *were* in the priſon: and whatſoever they did there, he was the doer *of it*.

23 The keeper of the priſon looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; becauſe the LORD *was* with him: and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to proſper.

CHAP.

V. 13—16.] The baſe affection of this vile woman being finally diſappointed, it was changed for the moſt rancorous enmity, and ſhe ſeems to have exulted in the opportunity, which ſhe now had of being revenged upon him. When, therefore, the men came in, ſhe addreſſed them, without mentioning Potiphar, in the affected language of rage and diſdain. She called Joſeph an Hebrew from Eber, one of the anceſtors of Abraham. This was ſpoken in contempt of his original, and religion. She added, that he left his garment with her, intimating that having called aloud for help, he haſted to eſcape; upon which ſeizing hold of his garment, ſhe had endeavoured in vain to retain him, till they came to apprehend him.

V. 17. *To mock me*, &c.] To inſult and treat me in a baſe unworthy manner.

V. 19—20.] We do not find that Joſeph attempted to ſay one word in his own defence: perhaps he was not permitted; and perhaps he was not inclined, as ſenſible it would be all in vain: however, he was dumb upon David's principle, "thou ſhalt anſwer for me, O Lord my God." Though we cannot but cenſure Potiphar for ſo haſtily crediting this accuſation of a perſon of ſuch approved excellency: yet conſidering the abſolute authority maſters then poſſeſſed over the lives of their ſlaves, the vehement rancour of his accuſer, and the baſeneſs of the crime laid to his charge; it was certainly by a remarkable reſtraint from God, that Joſeph was preſerved from being put to death. He was therefore put into the priſon where the king's priſoners were. In this circumſtance alſo the hand of the Lord is to be noticed: in any other priſon probably Pharaoh had never heard of him.

V. 22. *He was the doer of it.*] Through the wiſdom and fidelity which Joſeph manifeſted, he ſoon acquired the confidence of the keeper; and though he was at firſt ſeverely treated, (*Pſalm* cv. 17—19;) yet he afterwards became both comfortable and uſeful. Doubtleſs the priſoners were treated by him with ſingular humanity; and we hope benefited by his pious counſels, excellent example, and winning benevolence.

V. 23. *Becauſe the Lord*, &c.] This was ſo evident that the keeper of the priſon noticed it, and was influenced, perhaps converted by it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our enemies may ſtrip us of external diſtinctions and ornaments, but wiſdom and grace cannot be taken from us: they may baniſh us from friends, relatives, and country, but they cannot deprive us of the preſence of the Lord: they may exclude us from the benefits of common providence, rob us of liberty, and confine us in dungeons; but they cannot ſhut us out from communion with God, ſeclude us from the throne of Grace, or bereave us of the ſpecial bleſſings of ſalvation. The ordinances of God, and the ſociety of his people, are uſeful, and in ſome ſenſe almoſt neceſſary to the life of faith and growth of grace, eſpecially in young converts; ſo that parents and miniſters are juſtly fearful leſt their beloved children or people ſhould be ſecluded from them: but if God's providence, contrary to our inclination, deprive us of them, his gracious preſence can ſupply the deficiency, make the ſoul like a watered garden, though deſtitute of ſuch advantages; and render us both comfortable, reſpectable, proſperous, and uſeful. Had Potiphar purchaſed Joſeph with half the ſubſtance of his houſe, he had made an

CHAP. XL.

Contains, 1ſt. The impriſonment of Pharaoh's chief butler, and chief baker, v. 1—3. 2d. Joſeph charged with them. 3d. Their dreams, and his interpretation of them, with his petition to the chief butler, v. 4—19. 4th. The accompliſhment of the dreams, and the chief butler's forgetfulneſs of him, v. 20—23.

AND it came to paſs after theſe things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth againſt two *of* his officers, againſt the chief of the butlers, and againſt the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the houſe of the captain of the guard, into the priſon, the place were Joſeph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joſeph with them, and he ſerved them; and they continued a ſeaſon in ward.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the priſon.

6 And

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an advantageous bargain: and, though he was a heathen, till he was impoſed on, he learned his value by experience, and treated him accordingly. Yet how little do many chriſtians underſtand the value of ſuch ſervants as fear God, who will always be moſt faithful, induſtrious, and ſucceſsful! But we muſt allow on the other hand that mere pretenders to religion, of character and conduct exactly the reverſe of Joſeph, occaſion this prejudice amongſt thoſe who cannot, or will not, diſcriminate betwixt the humble chriſtian and the noiſy hypocrite.—When the Lord pleaſes, he can eaſily give his ſervants favour even among ſtrangers, and none ever was a loſer by being kind unto them. Uſually they, who accommodate themſelves to a low and laborious ſituation, will get forward, and acquire confidence. But alas! proſperity draws on temptation; and perſonal accompliſhments are often ſnares to others, as well as to the poſſeſſor; therefore they ſhould not be envied, coveted, or gloried in. Through the force of human depravity, thoſe amiable qualities, which ſhould command eſteem, attract the attention of the licentious eye, and kindle in the heart the flame of forbidden luſt; which having acquired the aſcendancy, ſcorns all reſtraint, and throws off all regard to modeſty and decency. Thus when luſt is conceived, it bringeth forth ſin; and the infatuated wretch ruſhing headlong forward to deſtruction, commences ſeducer, and the factor for Satan in tempting others to wickedneſs: nor is any thing more to be dreaded than ſuch a tempter, or more to be ſhunned than ſuch temptations; and, if we mean not to commit iniquity, we ought to flee as a bird from the ſnare, and as a roe from the hand of the hunter. Let us not in this glorious example of Joſeph reſt ſatisfied with admiring him, but proceed to adore the energy of divine grace: truſting to that grace, we may hope to be more than conquerors, not only if expoſed to the fiery trial of perſecution, but even if aſſaulted in the more dangerous manner that Joſeph was. But would we ſtand ſtedfaſt in the day of trial, we muſt have our minds armed with gratitude, juſtice, fear of God, faith and love, abhorrence of evil, contempt of worldly pleaſure or gain, and readineſs for the croſs: we muſt learn alſo to judge of every ſin, and of the luſts of the fleſh eſpecially, not according to that ſlight manner, which the world does; but as enormous crimes, for the ſake of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience. And that importunity may not prevail upon us, nor ſecrecy encourage us; we ſhould endeavour to have our minds habitually poſſeſſed with a ſenſe of our obligations unto God, his all-ſeeing eye upon us, and the approaching diſcoveries of the day of judgment. But if Satan cannot tempt us to ſin, he will diſtreſs us: and we may lay our account with the embittered reſentment of thoſe, whoſe wicked inclinations we diſappoint; and with being falſely accuſed of thoſe very crimes which we abhor, yea becauſe we abhor them. However, it is better, if the will of God be, that we ſuffer for well-doing than for evil-doing: a clear conſcience, and the preſence of a merciful God, will ſupport us, not only under other trials, but under the moſt injurious calumnies; and we need not much labour to vindicate ourſelves; in due time the Lord will vindicate us, and wipe off every aſperſion.—The more meekly and patiently we ſuffer, the leſs bitterneſs ſhall we experience in our trials, and the more conſiſtent will our conduct be with the character of chriſtians. By all theſe things the Lord is training up his people for glory; perhaps for better ſcenes, and important ſervices in this preſent world; and if we are not in a wrong ſpirit, or out of the path of duty, we can never be in a wrong place either for comfort or uſefulneſs.

But let us not forget through Joſeph to look unto Jeſus, who ſuffered being tempted, yet without ſin: who was calumniated and perſecuted, but without cauſe; "who was "led as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her "ſhearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth," to recriminate, or to vindicate himſelf; and who by the croſs aſcended to the throne. May we be enabled, and contented to follow in the ſame path of ſubmiſſive ſuffering, to the ſame place of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XL.] V. 3. *The captain, &c.*] Potiphar was captain of the guard, and it ſeems this ſtate priſon was adjoining to his houſe, and entruſted to his care; and that the keeper of the priſon was his deputy.

V. 4

6 And Joſeph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold they *were* ſad.

7 And he aſked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's houſe, ſaying, Wherefore look ye *ſo* ſadly to day?

8 And they ſaid unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joſeph ſaid unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joſeph, and ſaid unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me.

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her bloſſoms ſhot forth; *and* the cluſters thereof brought forth ripe grapes.

11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and preſſed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joſeph ſaid unto him, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days.

13 Yet within three days ſhall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and reſtore thee unto thy place: and thou ſhalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou waſt his butler.

14 But think on me when it ſhall be well with thee, and ſhew kindneſs, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this houſe.

15 For indeed I was ſtolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here alſo have I done nothing that they ſhould put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker ſaw that the interpretation was good; he ſaid unto Joſeph, I alſo *was* in my dream, and behold, *I had* three white baſkets on my head.

17 And in the uppermoſt baſket *there was* of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the baſket upon my head.

18 And Joſeph anſwered, and ſaid, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baſkets *are* three days.

19 Yet within three days ſhall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and ſhall hang thee on a tree; and the birds ſhall eat thy fleſh from off thee.

20 And it came to paſs the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birth-day, that he made a feaſt unto all his ſervants: and he lifted up the

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V. 4. *Charged*, &c.] It is probable that at firſt Joſeph was not only cloſely confined, but ſeverely treated in this priſon. After ſome time however Potiphar's reſentment cooled: and conſidering the whole of his prudent and excellent conduct, and the improbability of the charge brought againſt him, with other circumſtances, he perhaps began to ſuſpect that it was a malicious accuſation: and though he would not give umbrage to his wife, by taking Joſeph out of priſon; yet he ſeems to have connived at the kind treatment which he there met with; and being ſenſible of his abilities, was not unwilling he ſhould be truſted and be ſerviceable in that ſituation. Being thus employed, he gave the King's butler and baker, as priſoners of rank, all the attendance required or allowed.

V. 6. *They were ſad.*] The priſoners, conſidering their dreams as ſupernatural, and indications of their future fate, were very melancholy: their ſituation and perhaps ſome conſciouſneſs of guilt cauſed them to forbode the worſt.

V. 7. *Wherefore look ye*, &c.] This is a beautiful ſpecimen of that attentive tenderneſs and ſympathy, by means of which God gave Joſeph favour with every one.

V. 8. *No interpreter.*] They could not in the priſon conſult their diviners, in whom they placed confidence; and this added to their anxiety. Joſeph's appoſite queſtion intimates, that he had before diſcourſed with them of the true God, and endeavoured to draw them off from thoſe lying vanities to his worſhip and ſervice: it alſo precluded them from giving him the honour of the interpretation.

V. 13. *Yet*, &c.] The actual delivery of the cup into Pharaoh's hand obviouſly denoted the favourable iſſue.

V. 14, 15.] Joſeph deſired, by appeal to Pharaoh, to make ſuit for his enlargement; but he had no further requeſt to preſent. He ſaid not how, or by whom he was ſtolen: for he was not diſpoſed to criminate or reproach his brethren. Neither did he ſo much as accuſe his wicked miſtreſs, or at all reflect on Potiphar, or expreſs any reſentment for his falſe impriſonment.

V. 19. *The birds ſhall eat*, &c.] The bake-meats eaten by the birds and not brought to Pharaoh, was the unfavourable preſage: the bad dream would not admit of a good interpretation; nor could Joſeph conſiſtently with fidelity conceal the truth, however it might pain him to ſpeak it. The baker might be the better for it, if he prepared accordingly.

V. 20. *Birth-day*, &c.] The anniverſary of Pharaoh's birth-day being obſerved as a ſeaſon of feſtivity, theſe officers were enquired after; and either through the merits

the head of the chief butler, and of the chief baker among his ſervants.

21 And he reſtored the chief butler unto his butlerſhip again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joſeph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joſeph, but forgat him.

CHAP. XLI.

Contains, 1ſt. Pharaoh's two dreams, which the magicians could not interpret, v. 1—8. 2d. The chief butler's report of Joſeph, who was ſent for out of priſon, and interpreted the dreams, to foretel ſeven years of plenty and ſeven of ſcarcity, v. 9—32. 3d. Joſeph's counſel, preferment, and marriage, v. 33—45. 4th. The ſeven years of plenty, and Joſeph's management, v. 46—49. 5th. His two children, v. 50—52. 6th. The beginning of the ſeven years of ſcarcity, and the diſtreſs of the Egyptians relieved by Joſeph, v. 53—57.

AND it came to paſs at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold he ſtood by the river.

2 And behold, there came up out of the river ſeven well-favoured kine, and fat-fleſhed; and they fed in a meadow.

3 And

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of their cauſe, or the caprice of their ſovereign, they were thus differently diſpoſed of. We have but two inſtances I think in ſcripture of feſtive obſervation of birth-days: this of Pharaoh, and that of Herod, (*Matt.* xiv,) neither of which give much ſanction to the cuſtom.—Indeed it ſeems rather incongruous that worldly people, who are ſo fond of living here, ſhould celebrate the burial of one year after another of their ſhort ſpan, with ſuch indications of hilarity. A chriſtian may, however, very properly obſerve his birth-day; and indeed has cauſe to rejoice both that ever he was born, and that he comes nearer and nearer to the concluſion of ſin and ſorrow, and to the completion of felicity. And he may take occaſion to bleſs the Lord for the mercies, to humble himſelf for the ſins of the preceding year, and to ſeek his bleſſing upon the year enſuing.

V. 23. *The chief butler*, &c.] Neither the kindneſs ſhewn by Joſeph; nor the interpretation of the dream thus remarkably verified; nor the diſcourſes he had heard from him concerning his religion; nor his excellent conduct which adorned it, made any laſting impreſſion on the chief butler, when he was again poſſeſſed of the emoluments of his office, and enjoying the pleaſures of the court.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

High ſtations are ſlippery places; and from the preſence chamber to the dungeon, is in many earthly courts but a ſhort ſtep: a place in *his* favour who will not forſake his true ſervants, is of unſpeakable value.—In the moſt voluntary actions of men, who know not God and pay no regard to him, we may diſcern his hand; and perceive how his purpoſes unfold, and his counſels work towards an accompliſhment, ſlowly but ſurely. Whilſt we are encouraged by the gracious dealings of the Lord towards his afflicted ſervant, let us mark how he reſembled Chriſt; and may we through the grace of God reſemble and imitate him, in fidelity, humanity, compaſſion, unaffected piety, and humility; in repreſſing the pride and reſentment, which agitate our hearts, embitter our ſpirits, and are apt to diſgrace our converſation, when we meet with injurious treatment, or ſpeak of that which we have met with; and in modeſtly pleading our own cauſe without *needleſsly* mentioning, or expoſing the faults even of our moſt malignant enemies.—Alas! the foreſight of ſinners, however attained, reaches but a few days forward: but by faith the believer looks through the ſufferings of time, and anticipates the glories of eternity. Though we may not *in general* expect information from dreams, nor regret the want of an interpreter of them: yet to be favoured with a wiſe and faithful interpreter of God's providences and oracles, eſpecially in ſeaſons of affliction, is an inexpreſſible mercy. (*Job* xxxiii. 23.) Here alſo interpretations belong to God; from him we muſt ſeek them, and to him give the praiſe, whatever inſtruments he may employ. But the ſame faithful interpretation, which encourages one, will contain an awful warning to another of a contrary character; yet both profitable: for, bleſſed be God, if we diſcover our danger, we need not ſeek long or in vain for a refuge. Temporal deliverances muſt generally be longer waited for by the Lord's ſervants, than by others; that they may have them with a bleſſing, and be previouſly prepared for them: and the Lord will teach them to ceaſe from man, before they obtain their beſt bleſſings. We muſt not complain, nor be diſcouraged, if we are forgotten, or ungratefully requited by thoſe whom we have ſerved. Ingratitude is, alas! the fault of our nature, and we are guilty of it as well as others, eſpecially in our baſe forgetfulneſs of God.—But let us not forget the ſufferings, promiſes, and love of our Redeemer; nor neglect to mark in this narration of Joſeph, a type of Jeſus, in the depth of his humiliation, by free grace, aſſuring one of the malefactors which hung beſide him, of immediate and eternal felicity; and with equal juſtice leaving the other to hardneſs of heart and eternal pedition.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLI.] V. 1. *Two full years*, &c.] Joſeph muſt have been ſome time in priſon before it can be ſuppoſed that he would be ſo far truſted, as to have the two ſtate priſoners under his charge: they were a conſiderable time in priſon; and two years more elapſed, without any tokens of approaching deliverance. Doubtleſs Joſeph would often be ready to ſay, "Lord, how long?"—The

ſcene

3 And behold, ſeven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured, and lean-fleſhed; and ſtood by the *other* kine, upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill-favoured and lean-fleſhed kine, did eat up the ſeven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he ſlept and dreamed the ſecond time: and behold, ſeven ears of corn came up upon one ſtalk, rank and good.

6 And behold, ſeven thin ears and blaſted with the eaſt-wind ſprung up after them.

7 And the ſeven thin ears devoured the ſeven rank and full ears: and Pharaoh awoke, and behold, *it was* a dream.

8 And it came to paſs in the morning, that his ſpirit was troubled; and he ſent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wiſe-men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 Then ſpake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, ſaying, I do remember my faults this day.

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his ſervants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's houſe, *both* me, and the chief baker.

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, ſervant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to paſs, as he interpreted to us, ſo it was: me he reſtored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 Then Pharaoh ſent and called Joſeph, and they brought him haſtily out of the dungeon: and he ſhaved *himſelf*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard ſay of thee, *that* thou canſt underſtand a dream, to interpret it.

16 And Joſeph anſwered Pharaoh, ſaying, *It is* not in me: God ſhall give Pharaoh an anſwer of peace.

17 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, In my dream, behold, I ſtood upon the bank of the river.

18 And behold, there came up out of the river ſeven kine, fat-fleſhed, and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow.

19 And behold, ſeven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleſhed, ſuch as I never ſaw in all the land of Egypt for badneſs.

20 And the lean and the ill-favoured kine did eat up the firſt ſeven fat kine.

21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* ſtill ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I ſaw in my dream, and behold, ſeven ears came up in one ſtalk, full and good.

23 And behold, ſeven ears withered, thin, *and* blaſted with the eaſt-wind, ſprung up after them.

ſcene of Pharaoh's dreams is laid at the river Nile, whoſe annual overflowing occaſioned the fertility of Egypt, which failed when that failed.

V. 2—7.] There ſeems in theſe dreams to be an alluſion to the graſs for the uſe of cattle, and to the corn for the food of man.

V. 8. *His ſpirit was troubled*, &c.] Though many of thoſe incoherencies, which are in ordinary dreams may be perceived: yet they were ſo impreſſed by God upon the king's mind, that he regarded them as a preſage of ſome great events to himſelf, or his kingdom. Moreover God ſo ordered it in order to forward Joſeph's advancement; that the magicians could not ſo much as make a plauſible conjecture at the meaning of theſe dreams.

V. 9. *My faults.*] Either formerly againſt Pharaoh, or in forgetting Joſeph.

V. 16. *It is not in me, God*, &c.] Joſeph would ſpeak of the Lord and his ſtatutes before kings, and not be aſhamed: thus he tacitly condemned all the pretended ſkill of the magicians, and endeavoured to draw the king himſelf from ſuch lying vanities unto the living God: at the ſame time, he modeſtly renounced all pretenſions to ſuperior ſagacity, and expreſſed his good-will to Pharaoh and his kingdom.

24 And the thin ears devoured the ſeven good ears: and I told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* unto me.

25 And Joſeph ſaid unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath ſhewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The ſeven good kine *are* ſeven years; and the ſeven good ears *are* ſeven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the ſeven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them, *are* ſeven years; and the ſeven empty ears blaſted with the eaſt-wind, ſhall be ſeven years of famine.

28 This *is* the thing which I have ſpoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do, he ſheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come ſeven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt.

30 And there ſhall ariſe after them ſeven years of famine, and all the plenty ſhall be forgotten in the land of Egypt: and the famine ſhall conſume the land.

31 And the plenty ſhall not be known in the land, by reaſon of that famine following: for it *ſhall be* very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* becauſe the thing *is* eſtabliſhed by God, and God will ſhortly bring it to paſs.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man diſcreet and wiſe, and ſet him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the ſeven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of thoſe good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food ſhall be for ſtore to the land, againſt the ſeven years of famine, which ſhall be in the land of Egypt; that the land periſh not through the famine.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his ſervants.

38 And Pharaoh ſaid unto his ſervants, Can we find *ſuch a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, Foraſmuch as God hath ſhewed thee all this, *there is* none ſo diſcreet and wiſe as thou *art*.

40 Thou ſhalt be over my houſe, and according unto thy word ſhall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, See, I have ſet thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joſeph's hand, and arrayed him in veſtures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.

43 And he made him to ride in the ſecond chariot which he had; and they cried before him,

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V. 25. *The dream—is one.*] That is, both dreams have one meaning.

V. 26. *Are ſeven years.*] That is, a repreſentation of ſeven years: a very common mode of expreſſion; however in a ſingle inſtance multitudes have managed to infer things abſurd and impoſſible, from one ſimilar to it: viz. "This is my body."

V. 33—36.] Joſeph preſumed to offer this counſel, as the practical inference from the revelation, God had afforded them: which was intended to forewarn them that they might make preparation.

V. 37. *The thing was good*, &c.] Under the preſent impreſſion of Joſeph's interpretation of the dream, they approved the counſel as undeniably good; perhaps not without each expecting, for himſelf or his friend, this lucrative and honourable employment.

V. 38. *Spirit of God is*, &c.] This concluſion probably ſprang from the remainder of a traditional opinion, that the higheſt and nobleſt wiſdom was derived from the inſpiration of the Spirit of God: and their judgment concerning Joſeph was doubtleſs produced not only from the interpretation, excelling all the ſkill of the magicians, but from the advice equally ſuperior to all the ſagacity of his counſellors. All parties were ſilent on the occaſion, and we may well aſcribe it to God's over-awing their minds, that no oppoſition was made; when we conſider how much the ſpirit which is in us luſteth to envy.

V. 40. *Shall all*, &c.] Thus was Joſeph made chief miniſter, and ruler in every department of government; as well as placed over the buſineſs of collecting corn.

V. 41—43.] Joſeph ſeems to have been modeſtly diſpoſed to decline ſuch a weighty and exalted ſtation; and intimidated at the difficulty and danger of it: and therefore needed repeated aſſurances to encourage him.—By theſe ſeveral tokens, the king publicly avowed

him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee ſhall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joſeph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Aſenath the daughter of Poti-pherah prieſt of On: and Joſeph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 And Joſeph *was* thirty years old when he ſtood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: And Joſeph went out from the preſence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the ſeven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the food of the ſeven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the ſame.

49 And Joſeph gathered corn as the ſand of the ſea, very much, until he left numbering: for *it was* without number.

50 And unto Joſeph were born two ſons before the years of famine came: which Aſenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah prieſt of On, bare unto him.

51 And Joſeph called the name of the firſt-born Manaſſeh; for God, *ſaid he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's houſe.

52 And the name of the ſecond called he Ephraim: for God hath cauſed me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 And the ſeven years of plenteouſneſs, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the ſeven years of dearth began to come, according as Joſeph had ſaid: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famiſhed, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh ſaid unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joſeph; what he ſaith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joſeph opened all the ſtore-houſes, and ſold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed ſore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joſeph for to buy *corn*; becauſe that the famine was *ſo* ſore in all lands.

CHAP.

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avowed his appointment, and ſhewed that it would be at the peril of any one who dared to oppoſe it.

V. 44. *I am Pharaoh*, &c.] As ſure as I am king of Egypt I will ſtand by thee in this matter: ſo that no man ſhall do any thing contrary to thy command, and allowance.

V. 45. *Zaphnath-Paaneah.*] This means, *a revealer of ſecrets.* Some ſay, *a ſaviour of the land.*

The Prieſt of On was ſome prince, or great lord of the court.—Joſeph immediately went over all the land to take ſurveys, build granaries, and make preparations for the execution of his deſign.

V. 47. *By handfuls.*] An uncommon and vaſt increaſe.

V. 49. *Corn as the ſand*, &c.] We may conjecture, that the fifth before mentioned was impoſed as a public tax upon the whole land: and that Joſeph moreover bought vaſt quantities, when corn was ſo plentiful and cheap, which he ſtored up in granaries upon the ſpot; thereby conſulting both eaſe and conveniency; and giving the people a pledge that it was laid up for them, not taken from them.

V. 51. *Manaſſeh.*] Signifies *forgetfulneſs:* for God had made Joſeph to forget all his toil and his father's houſe, by the proſperous event of his captivity, ſlavery, and impriſonment.—Perhaps, when he ſought enlargement through the chief butler, he had thoughts of returning home, out of regard to his father and family: but being now ſettled and engaged otherwiſe in God's providence, he had dropt ſuch thoughts. We muſt aſcribe it to the peculiar diſpoſal of God, that he was kept from ſending to enquire about them.

V. 52. *Ephraim.*] Signifies *fruitfulneſs.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord in his appointed time will bring his people out of trouble, purified as gold from the furnace: but ſeldom either in the way, or at the ſeaſon which they expect; or until he hath brought them off from other dependences to a ſimple truſt in, and ſubmiſſion to, him.—In the multitude of dreams there are divers vanities, and in general they are neither worth repeating, nor capable of any interpretation: yet ſo abſolutely is our imagination, ſleeping as well as waking, in the Lord's hand, that without ſuppoſing any thing prophetical in them, (as in Pharaoh's dreams) he may thereby make and leave an impreſſion upon the mind, which may have the moſt important conſequences to ourſelves and others. We are not to deem thoſe expectations fruſtrated, which are not immediately anſwered; nor that ſeed of the word thrown

CHAP. XLII.

Contains, 1ſt. Jacob ſending his ten ſons down to Egypt to buy corn, v. 1—5. 2d. The harſh reception and treatment they met with from Joſeph, and their remorſe of conſcience, v. 6—23. 3d. Simeon detained, the others ſent home, and charged to bring their younger brother, v. 24—28. 4th. Their fright upon the road, on finding their money in their ſacks' mouth; their report to Jacob, and his complaint, lamentation, and reſolution, v. 29—38.

NOW when Jacob ſaw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob ſaid unto his ſons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he ſaid, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live and not die.

3 And Joſeph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joſeph's brother, Jacob ſent not with his brethren: for he ſaid, Leſt peradventure miſchief befal him.

5 And the ſons of Iſrael came to buy *corn* among thoſe that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joſeph *was* the governor over the land, *and* he *it was* that ſold to all the people of the land: and Joſeph's brethren came, and bowed down themſelves before him, *with* their faces to the earth.

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away, which doth not immediately ſpring up: the moſt negligent and forgetful may hereafter remember, and be humbled for their preſent inattention. Deliverances both from temporal and ſpiritual diſtreſs often ſurpriſe the praying ſoul when leaſt expected, ſo that a man becomes like them that dream. And as God frequently pours contempt upon princes, and takes pleaſure in abaſing the haughty; ſo he delights as much in advancing the humble from the dunghill, to inherit the throne of glory. Humility and a regard to the glory of God are requiſite, in order to behave ſuitably in proſperous circumſtances: and an anſwer of peace may be expected, when thoſe are conſulted in whom is the Spirit of God: and to honour thoſe who honour him, the Lord frequently confounds the wiſdom of the wiſe, and brings to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent. When he pleaſes to give wiſdom and favour, he can conciliate the affections, or overawe the ſpirits of all; and prevent oppoſition from the jarring counſels and ſelfiſh paſſions of the ambitious and aſpiring.—Important truſts, however unexceptionably obtained and managed, are an incumbrance rather than an advantage to the poſſeſſor; who might be more comfortable, though not ſo uſeful, in an obſcure ſituation. Nay indeed all worldly proſperity, like the years of plenty, is fleeting away, and will ſoon be forgotten and ſwallowed up in the afflictions which are coming upon the wicked. In Joſeph, however, we ſtill ſee a bright example of fidelity, activity, and equity: and an inſtance of the extenſive good, which in ſome circumſtances may be done by one man, when called forth, furniſhed, and proſpered by the Lord.—The knowledge of future temporal events might in ſome inſtances be uſeful, yet would ſeldom be pleaſant: but the knowledge of the future ſtate and eternal world will be both uſeful and pleaſant, if we will but labour for that meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give us; for him hath God the Father ſealed. He is the great antitype of Joſeph: riſen, aſcended, and on the throne of glory, all power is veſted in him as mediator: he is the revealer of ſecrets, and the preſerver of the land: through the whole earth is a famine of the bread of life; but he hath provided inexhauſtible ſupplies: to him the Father bears teſtimony, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;" go 'to Jeſus, and what he bids you, do.' Attending to this voice, and applying to him, he will open his treaſuries, and ſatisfy the hungry ſoul, of every age and nation, with goodneſs, yea without money and without price. But they who ſlight this proviſion muſt ſtarve; and they who bow not the knee before him, and will not that he ſhould reign over them, will be inevitably deſtroyed as enemies to him and his cauſe.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLII.] V. 1, 2.] Jacob underſtood from common report, that in this time of general ſcarcity there was abundance of corn in Egypt, which was freely ſold to thoſe of other nations:—When he ſaid, 'Why do ye look one upon another?' it implied that already they were reduced to great diſtreſs, and ſcarcely knew what to do: and if this was the caſe in Jacob's family, after the firſt year of the famine, what muſt have been the caſe of multitudes before the ſeven years were expired?

V. 3. *Joſeph's*, &c.] All Jacob's ſons ſeem to have been married, and to have had families at this time: perhaps the wealth of the family being thus divided, and by the badneſs of the times diminiſhed, they had parted with ſome of thoſe ſervants, whom we before read of; and perhaps they diſpoſed of the reſt, previous to their going to reſide in Egypt; for we read no more of their ſervants, or of any that went down beſides Jacob and his deſcendants, with their wives.

V. 4. *Leſt miſchief*, &c.] As he ſuppoſed had befallen his beloved Joſeph.

V. 6. *Bowed*, &c.] Joſeph's dreams at length began to be accompliſhed: his brethren's ſheaves bowed to his ſheaf; for his was full, and their's were empty.

7 And

7 And Joſeph ſaw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himſelf ſtrange unto them, and ſpake roughly unto them; and he ſaid unto them, Whence come ye? And they ſaid, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joſeph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joſeph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and ſaid unto them, Ye *are* ſpies; to ſee the nakedneſs of the land you are come.

10 And they ſaid unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy ſervants come.

11 We *are* all one man's ſons: we *are* true men, thy ſervants are no ſpies.

12 And he ſaid unto them, Nay, but to ſee the nakedneſs of the land you are come.

13 And they ſaid, Thy ſervants *are* twelve brethren, the ſons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngeſt *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not.

14 And Joſeph ſaid unto them, That *it is* that I ſpeak unto you, ſaying, Ye *are* ſpies.

15 Hereby ye ſhall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye ſhall not go forth hence, except your youngeſt brother come hither.

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye ſhall be kept in priſon, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you: or elſe by the life of Pharaoh ſurely ye *are* ſpies.

17 And he put them all together into ward, three days.

11 And Joſeph ſaid unto them the third day, This do, and live: *for* I fear God.

19 If ye *be* true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the houſe of your priſon: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houſes.

20 But bring your youngeſt brother unto me: ſo ſhall your words be verified, and ye ſhall not die. And they did ſo.

V. 7. *He made*, &c.] It is evident that Joſeph did not behave thus out of reſentment; for in the whole tranſaction he exceedingly denied himſelf, and put a force on his own inclinations: doubtleſs he would be unwilling to augment the load of his father's grief, and he muſt know that his conduct would have this tendency; and he would rather have rejoiced to ſet his heart at eaſe by an immediate meſſage. Indeed it is moſt probable that the whole of the buſineſs, from his firſt advancement to Jacob's deſcent into Egypt, was conducted either by expreſs direction, or more ſecret impulſe from God; in order to the accompliſhment of his purpoſes reſpecting Jacob and his poſterity.—Indeed it would not have been proper for Joſeph immediately to have received his offending brethren into full favour, until it appeared that they were ſenſible of their guilt, and ſhewed ſome ſymptoms of remorſe: by being concealed he had a fair opportunity of diſcovering the real ſtate of their mind, from time to time: and by virtue of his authority, he was able not only to make ſtrict trial of them, but to employ means exactly ſuited to produce that ſtate of mind which he wiſhed to ſee; both to awaken and keep awake that remorſe of conſcience which was profitable for them; and to abate that pride and ſtoutneſs of heart which were natural to them. By his own experience he knew the good effects of ſharp and long continued troubles, and was willing to try the ſame medicine upon them.—At the ſame time he ſeems to have been very ſolicitous about the ſtate of the family; and to have aimed to obtain information on that head, eſpecially as he ſaw not his own brother Benjamin.

V. 9. *Joſeph*, &c.] Joſeph now experienced in part the accompliſhment of his dreams, of which perhaps he had once deſpaired; and was ſatisfied that it was a divine monition, though once he might queſtion whether it were not a deluſion.—To effect his purpoſes, he charged them with being ſpies ſent by ſome foreign prince who intended to invade Egypt, that they might ſpy out the moſt defenceleſs quarter for his attack; and urged that they only covered their real buſineſs under the pretext of buying corn.

V. 11. *All one man's ſons.*] It would not appear likely that one man would venture ten ſons in the hazardous employment of ſpies. Thus Joſeph drew from them the information which he wanted.

V. 15. *By the life of Pharaoh*, &c.] We are ſorry to cenſure ſo favourite a character as that of Joſeph; but in this he muſt be blamed: his ſwearing by the life of Pharaoh could be no other than a ſort of court oath, and a profane flattery of the prince, which Joſeph ſhould have proteſted againſt, at leaſt not ſanctioned by his example. And even if we ſuppoſe, that he did not cuſtomarily uſe this expreſſion, but only now aſſumed it as a more effectual blind; ſtill we cannot excuſe it: it was at beſt doing evil, that good might come. "Let your communication" (that is in ordinary converſation,) "be yea, yea; nay, nay; "for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil."

V. 17. *Into ward three days.*] Conſidering Joſeph's authority, the nature of the crime of which he pretended to ſuſpect them, and the roughneſs of his behaviour; they perhaps expected little elſe during theſe three days, than to be put to death.

V. 18. *I fear God.*] This expreſſion might ſurpriſe, and perhaps encourage Joſeph's brethren: but his chief deſign ſeems to have been this; by declaring that he, a ſuppoſed Egyptian, feared God, and would therefore not do them any injuſtice, he meant to awaken the remorſe of their conſciences; who, though educated as Iſraelites in the true worſhip of God, had not been reſtrained by his fear from the moſt unjuſt and cruel treatment of their brother.

21 And they ſaid one to another, We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.

22 And Reuben anſwered them, ſaying, Spake I not unto you, ſaying, Do not ſin againſt the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold alſo, his blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joſeph underſtood *them*; for he ſpake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himſelf about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 Then Joſeph commanded to fill their ſacks with corn, and to reſtore every man's money into his ſack, and to give them proviſion for the way: and thus did he unto them.

26 And they laded their aſſes with the corn, and departed thence.

27 And as one of them opened his ſack to give his aſs provender in the inn, he eſpied his money: for behold it *was* in his ſack's mouth.

28 And he ſaid unto his brethren, My money is reſtored; and lo *it is* even in my ſack: and their hearts failed *them*, and they were afraid, ſaying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

29 And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befel unto them, ſaying,

30 The man *who is* the lord of the land, ſpake roughly to us, and took us for ſpies of the country.

31 And we ſaid unto him, We are true men; we are no ſpies.

32 We *be* twelve brethren, ſons of our father: one *is* not, and the youngeſt *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 And the man the lord of the country ſaid unto us, Hereby ſhall I know that ye *are* true men; leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food for* the famine of your houſholds, and be gone.

34 And bring your youngeſt brother unto me: then ſhall I know that you *are* no ſpies, *but* that you *are* true men: *ſo* will I deliver you your brother, and ye ſhall traffick in the land.

35 And it came to paſs as they emptied their ſacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his ſack: and when *both* they and their father ſaw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father ſaid unto them, Me have ye bereaved *of my children:* Joſeph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away:* all theſe things are againſt me.

37 And Reuben ſpake unto his father, ſaying, Slay my two ſons, if I bring him not to

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V. 21 *We are verily guilty*, &c.] Joſeph's brethren ſeem to have continued inſenſible whilſt in priſon, but now their conſciences were touched: and conſidering how the fear of God influenced this ſuppoſed Egyptian, Joſeph's anguiſh and intreaties, and their unrelenting malice, recurred to their remembrance, and they began to conclude that God was about to take vengeance upon them for that cruelty.

V. 23. *They knew not*, &c.] Thus Joſeph was favoured with an encouraging token of the ſucceſs of his plan, to ſupport his mind till he ſhould witneſs the final iſſue.

V. 24. *Took*, &c.] Simeon was one of the murderers of the Shechemites, and probably of a daring hardy ſpirit: it is not unlikely that he was peculiarly vehement againſt Joſeph before, or ſeemed the leaſt affected now: therefore Joſeph allotted him this additional diſcipline.

V. 27. *Inn.*] Probably this was nothing more than a ſhelter provided for travellers, to which every one brought his own proviſions.

V. 28. *Their hearts*, &c.] Expecting no favour, they deemed this a ſnare laid for them; and were afraid of being purſued, and proſecuted as thieves. This was doubtleſs the effect that Joſeph intended to produce, in order to augment their convictions, and humiliation. As they had before eſcaped when guilty; they ſeemed ready to conclude that they ſhould now ſuffer for a crime of which they were innocent; and they acknowledged the hand of God in it.

V. 35. *Afraid*, &c.] Probably Jacob ſuſpected a fallacy in their relation, and that they really had committed ſome crime which occaſioned Simeon's being left behind; and perhaps that they had ſome deſign upon Benjamin: at leaſt he charged the blame upon them in the next verſe, in language implying ſuch diſtruſt.—"Me "have ye bereaved, &c."

V. 37. *Slay my two ſons*, &c.] This was a very raſh and abſurd propoſal: what right had Reuben over the lives of his children? and what ſatisfaction could the murder of two grand-children give Jacob for the loſs of his Benjamin?

I will

to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befal him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CHAP. XLIII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob induced to send Benjamin with his sons, v. 1—14. 2d. Their second journey to Egypt, v. 15. 3d. Their fear, and apology when brought into Joseph's house, v. 16—22. 4th. Joseph's kindness, enquiries about their father, and tenderness to Benjamin; and their obeisance to him, v. 23—29. 5th. Joseph retiring to weep, and returning to entertain them, v. 30—34.

AND the famine *was* sore in the land.

2 And it came to pass when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.

4 If

—Moreover he engaged to bring back Benjamin without so much as adding, 'by the blessing of God,' or 'if the 'Lord will:' as if his puny arm could both defend and uphold him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even when the Lord rendereth a fruitful land barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein; he commonly shews that he doth not intend to proceed to extremities. Though much misery is endured, yet there is some redress and respite: one country supplies that of which another is destitute, and one year furnishes a redundance to help out the scarcity of another: in the other world alone will happiness or misery be unmixed; no scarcity in the Canaan above, no redress in hell beneath. In distress or danger our business is not to stand looking one at another, desponding and inactive, but having discovered where help is to be had, to apply for it without delay, and without shrinking from labour, or grudging expence: especially in the dangers to which our immortal souls are exposed. There is provision in Christ; but to him we must come, and from him we must diligently seek it; even though in obtaining it we be called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and forsake all that we have. We have need, when we or our friends go from home, to commend ourselves and them to the divine protection; for we know not what unexpected dangers may be in the way: and when returned in safety we should not forget the tribute of praise, for many meet with terrible disasters. In the mystery of Providence, it is worth observation how God's purposes slowly but certainly unfold and are accomplished, often by the most improbable means; nay that those enemies who have set themselves to defeat his designs, are made the instruments of their fulfilment.—The guilt of sin will not wear out by time; nor will the consciousness of it: and though men may commit crimes with unconcern, and remain insensible for many years, conscience being struck dumb and stupified; yet there may be a time even in this world when it shall awake, and inspire such terrors as cannot be described: and it is well when it is so; otherwise it will certainly awake and torment the soul for ever in another world. In order therefore to awaken serious reflection in the guilty breast, the most afflictive dispensations of God's providence are precious blessings: and in some cases it is the result of wise love, to treat the proud and careless with roughness and distance; and as far as equity and the fear of God will allow, to shew them in our dealings with them the picture of their conduct to others, in order to bring their sins to their remembrance and excite a salutary remorse.—They therefore who are of a very tender nature, if they would do good, must sometimes disguise their feelings under an assumed sternness; as the surgeon probes the wound, or cuts the limb, with firmness and apparent unconcern; whilst his heart bleeds for the anguish he occasions. But when conscience is once awakened, there needs no accuser: when its terrors have seized the heart, every circumstance will increase the dismay; and under common calamities the consciousness of having avoided and protested against those crimes, which are thereby called to remembrance, will afford a singular support.—Many are the troubles of the righteous: yet imagination and error often magnify them; and many things appear to be against them, which are most effectually conducive to their good. The Lord will make such persons ashamed of their distrustful complaints; nor shall their grey hairs descend with that sorrow to the grave, which they have presaged: for the latter end of the upright man shall be peace.—But in this narration let us look unto Jesus: thus does he conceal himself, and his favour: thus does he rebuke and chasten those for whom he hath purposes of love; and by sharp corrections, and humiliating conviction from the Spirit of bondage, he breaks the stoutness, and mars the pride of their hearts, and brings them to true repentance: nor will he disclose his reconciled countenance, until he hath fully humbled, and broken their hearts by perhaps long continued discouragements; till he have proved their sincerity, and led them to the simplicity of faith, and dependence on him: then by the Spirit of adoption he will manifest himself unto them as their brother and their friend. Yet before they fully know him, or taste that he is gracious, he both consults their good and sustains their souls; preserves them from despair, and strengthens them to wait upon, and wait for him.—Thus may we do continually, never yielding to discouragement, still determining to seek no other refuge, and humbling ourselves more and more under his mighty hand! and then in due time he will answer our petitions, and far exceed our expectation.

4 If thou wilt ſend our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food.

5 But if thou wilt not ſend *him*, we will not go down: for the man ſaid unto us, Ye ſhall not ſee my face, except your brother *be* with you.

6 And Iſrael ſaid, Wherefore dealt ye *ſo* ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7 And they ſaid, The man aſked us ſtraitly of our ſtate, and of our kindred, ſaying, *Is* your father yet alive? have ye *another* brother? And we told him according to the tenour of theſe words: Could we certainly know that he would ſay, Bring your brother down?

8 And Judah ſaid unto Iſrael his father, Send the lad with me, and we will ariſe and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, *and* alſo our little ones.

9 I will be ſurety for him; of my hand ſhalt thou require him: If I bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.

10 For except we had lingered, ſurely now we had returned this ſecond time.

11 And their father Iſrael ſaid unto them, If *it muſt be* ſo now, do this; take of the beſt fruits in the land in your veſſels, and carry down the man a preſent, a little balm, and a little honey, ſpices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.

12 And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your ſacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an overſight.

13 Take alſo your brother, and ariſe, go again unto the man.

14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may ſend away your other brother, and Benjamin: If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.

15 And the men took that preſent, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and roſe up, and went down to Egypt, and ſtood before Joſeph.

16 And when Joſeph ſaw Benjamin with them, he ſaid to the ruler of his houſe, Bring *theſe* men home, and ſlay, and make ready; for *theſe* men ſhall dine with me at noon.

17 And the man did as Joſeph bade: and the man brought the men into Joſeph's houſe.

18 And the men were afraid, becauſe they were brought into Joſeph's houſe, and they ſaid, Becauſe of the money that was returned in our ſacks at the firſt time, are we brought in; that he may ſeek occaſion againſt us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our aſſes.

19 And they came near to the ſteward of Joſeph's houſe, and they communed with him at the door of the houſe.

20 And ſaid, O ſir, we came indeed down at the firſt time to buy food.

21 And it came to paſs when we came to the inn, that we opened our ſacks, and behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his ſack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our ſacks.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIII.] V. 9. *I will be ſurety*, &c.] Probably Judah, (whom we obſerved before to have ſhewn ſome tokens of repentance,) had acquired more of the confidence of Jacob than Reuben had; and he ſeems in the whole buſineſs to have been ſincerely deſirous of the welfare of Benjamin, as well as of the family; remembering perhaps with inward anguiſh his former treatment of Joſeph.

V. 10. *Except*, &c.] They had loſt time, through Jacob's unwillingneſs to conſent to Benjamin's accompanying them. And Judah thus intimates that the whole family was like to periſh, by means of their father's unreaſonable timidity reſpecting one individual.

V. 12. *Double money*, &c.] The money that was returned, and other money with which to purchaſe corn; perhaps double the ſum which they took before, in caſe the price ſhould be advanced. Thus he would ſhew that they meant fairly.

V. 14. *And God Almighty*, &c.] Jacob knew by experience the influence, which the Lord hath over every heart to incline it favourably to his people: and it is obſervable that in this ſpeech, in which he has recourſe to his former method of prevailing with man, by faith in, and prayer to God; he is again dignified with the name of Iſrael. (11.)

23 And

23 And he ſaid, Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treaſure in your ſacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24 And the man brought the men into Joſeph's houſe, and gave *them* water, and they waſhed their feet, and he gave their aſſes provender.

25 And they made ready the preſent againſt Joſeph came at noon: for they heard that they ſhould eat bread there.

26 And when Joſeph came home, they brought him the preſent which *was* in their hand into the houſe, and bowed themſelves to him to the earth.

27 And he aſked them of *their* welfare, and ſaid, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye ſpake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they anſwered, Thy ſervant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive: and they bowed down their heads, and made obeiſance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and ſaw his brother Benjamin, his mother's ſon, and ſaid, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye ſpake unto me? And he ſaid, God be gracious unto thee, my ſon.

30 And Joſeph made haſte; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he ſought *where* to weep, and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he waſhed his face, and went out, and refrained himſelf, and ſaid, Set on bread.

32 And they ſet on for him by himſelf, and for them by themſelves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themſelves: becauſe the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they ſat before him, the firſt-born according to his birth-right, and the youngeſt according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and ſent* meſſes unto them, from before him: but Benjamin's meſs was five times ſo much as any of their's. And they drank, and were merry with him.

CHAP.

V. 28. *They bowed down*, &c.] In thus bowing down, at the mention of their father, they, as it were, did obeiſance in his name and ſtead, according to Joſeph's ſecond dream. (xxxvii. 9, 10.)

V. 32. *By himſelf*, &c.] Joſeph, as an Hebrew, probably humoured the ſuperſtitious prejudices of the Egyptians; but he would not ſit with his brethren, leſt it ſhould excite ſuſpicion. The abomination, in which the Egyptians held eating with the Hebrews, may be aſcribed to the latter eating the fleſh of thoſe animals which the former held ſacred: therefore ſhepherds were alſo an abomination to the Egyptians, (xlvi. 24,) though they had flocks and herds: but perhaps this only related to ſuch ſhepherds as fed upon the fleſh of their flocks.

V. 33. *They ſat before him*, &c.] That is, by his appointment; which made them marvel. But probably they aſcribed it to ſome extraordinary ſagacity, or to the power of divination which he afterwards mentioned.

V. 35. *Five times*, &c.] A token of reſpect cuſtomary in thoſe days, which is not to be judged of by modern manners. Thus Joſeph tried whether his brethren would envy *Benjamin* this diſtinction, as they had envied *him* his coat of many colours.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould uſe great caution in forming reſolutions concerning our future conduct in things indifferent; for our perſeverance ſo much depends on the events of Providence, that thoſe things which we moſt fully purpoſe may become impracticable: in moſt things therefore, in which duty is not concerned, we are beſt ruled by circumſtances as they ariſe.—And if we have formed a raſh reſolution, to which we cannot with propriety adhere; we muſt virtually or explicitly acknowledge our miſtake, and forego our determination: for though firmneſs be very advantageous, obſtinacy is both fooliſh and ruinous. But when all our contrivances are over-ruled, and neceſſity compels us to ſay "it muſt be ſo now;" then ſubmiſſion to the will of the all-wiſe Diſpoſer, and a believing dependence on the Almighty Lord, who hath all hearts in his hands, will yield us a ſeaſonable ſupport: and whilſt we uſe every prudent conciliatory means, we ſhall beſt prevail with man, by firſt prevailing with the Lord in fervent prayer: this will alſo prove us to belong to the true Iſrael of God; and "thy will be done" ſhould cloſe every petition for temporal benefits, or againſt temporal afflictions.—Though men generally value very highly their gold and ſilver, and the luxuries which are accounted the beſt fruits of every land; yet in a time of famine they willingly barter them away for bread: how little then will they ſtand us in ſtead in the day of wrath! and how ready ſhould we be, if truly wiſe, to renounce them all as loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt!—There may be caſes in which obedience to an earthly ſuperior may be refuſed, as ſuperſeded by a higher obligation: but this refuſal ſhould never be made, except in caſes of evident neceſſity; and it ſhould always be backed with unanſwerable reaſons, and couched in terms of the utmoſt reſpect and meekneſs. Seldom, even when the refuſal is unexceptionable, can an impartial by-

ſtander

CHAP. XLIV.

Contains, 1ſt. The money by Joſeph's orders put into his brethren's ſacks, and his ſilver cup into Benjamin's, v. 1, 2. 2d. Joſeph's ſteward purſuing, overtaking, and accuſing them of theft, v. 3—6. 3d. Their plea of innocence; ſearch made; the cup found; their diſtreſs and return to Joſeph, v. 7—13. 4th. Their humiliation, his remonſtrance, and Judah's moſt pathetic ſpeech, v. 14—34.

AND he commanded the ſteward of his houſe, ſaying, Fill the men's ſacks with food as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his ſack's mouth:

2 And put my cup, the ſilver cup, in the ſack's mouth of the youngeſt, and his corn-money: and he did according to the word that Joſeph had ſpoken.

3 As ſoon as the morning was light, the men were ſent away, they and their aſſes.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and* not *yet* far off, Joſeph ſaid unto his ſteward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou doſt overtake them, ſay unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it*, in which my lord drinketh? and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in ſo doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he ſpake unto them theſe ſame words.

7 And they ſaid unto him, Wherefore ſaith my lord theſe words? God forbid that thy ſervants ſhould do according to this thing.

8 Behold, the money which we found in our ſacks' mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then ſhould we ſteal out of thy lord's houſe ſilver or gold?

9 With whom *ſoever* of thy ſervants it be found, *both* let him die, and we alſo will be my lord's bond-men.

10 And

ſtander wholly approve the manner in which it is given. When the Lord ſeems to frown upon us, we are prone to blame and to murmur againſt others; as venting our diſſatisfaction upon the inſtruments, when we are afraid and aſhamed to reflect upon the author, of our trouble; and much rebellion is often thus committed. When men mean ſincerely, they are apt to engage for more than they can perform: and if we feel our paſſions greatly moved, our tongue ſhould be held in as with a bridle; or it may afterwards occaſion much trouble.—Though terror once excited is increaſed by every event, yet innocence gives confidence, and ſupplies the want of, or furniſhes the moſt ſimple and expreſſive, eloquence.—He that walketh with wiſe men will be wiſe; and the good and pious words of the Egyptian, Joſeph's ſteward, ſhew us that a godly man's converſation is never uſeleſs: and teaches us to abound in that ſpeech, which is good for the uſe of edifying. Even thoſe, who inadvertently and by overſight have got poſſeſſion of others property, are bound to reſtore it, when they diſcover it: and from whatever quarter we get honeſt gain, we ought to look to the Lord as the giver of it. God's purpoſes are continually advancing to their full accompliſhment; but they who would have his ſpecial bleſſings, muſt wait for them: and they who would do ſpecial good, muſt learn to bridle and conceal their tendereſt paſſions. Thus Jeſus ſhews thoſe, whom he loves, more and more of their periſhing neceſſity, makes them perceive that he is their only refuge from deſtruction, and, conſulting their future good more than their preſent comfort, by ſalutary terrors and troubles overcomes their reluctance, and brings them to himſelf. Then, in his wiſe and holy ſovereignty, according to that proportion which he ſees good, he gives them ſome taſte of his exhilarating love, and welcomes them to the proviſions of his houſe, as earneſts of what he further intends for them; yet ſo as ſtill to prove and try them, with a view to their more complete humiliation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIV.] V. 2. *Put my cup*, &c.] This ſilver cup had probably been uſed at the entertainment. Joſeph ſeems to have been deſirous of aſcertaining how his brethren ſtood affected to Benjamin, Jacob's preſent favourite, and to their father on his account. Had they envied and hated Benjamin (the other ſon of Rachel, Leah's rival,) as they had him; and had they been influenced by the ſame unfeeling indignation againſt Jacob as heretofore; they would on this occaſion have diſcovered it: for when the cup was found upon Benjamin, they would have had a plauſible pretext for leaving him to be a ſlave, and returning home without him. In this caſe Joſeph would have acted very differently from what he did, when the event proved them to be ſo well diſpoſed both towards Benjamin and their father. At the ſame time this trial was exceedingly calculated to increaſe their humiliation.

V. 4, 5.] The abruptneſs of this unexpected addreſs was well ſuited to ſurpriſe and confuſe them, and to favour the deſign.—Joſeph ſeems to have meant, that by divination he had diſcovered they had ſtolen the cup; (15.) which could not have been, had he divined by means of the cup: it ſhould therefore probably be tranſlated, "that "about which he hath uſed divination."

V. 9. *Let him die*, &c.] Probably Joſeph expected that his brethren, conſcious of their innocency, would make no

10 And he ſaid, Now alſo *let* it *be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found ſhall be my ſervant; and ye ſhall be blameleſs.

11 Then they ſpeedily took down every man his ſack to the ground, and opened every man his ſack.

12 And he ſearched, *and* began at the eldeſt, and left at the youngeſt: and the cup was found in Benjamin's ſack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his aſs, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joſeph's houſe, (for he *was* yet there,) and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joſeph ſaid unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not, that ſuch a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah ſaid, What ſhall we ſay unto my lord? what ſhall we ſpeak? or how ſhall we clear ourſelves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy ſervants: behold, we *are* my lord's ſervants, both we, and *he* alſo with whom the cup is found.

17 And he ſaid, God forbid that I ſhould do ſo: *but* the man in whoſe hand the cup is found, he ſhall be my ſervant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and ſaid, O my lord, let thy ſervant, I pray thee, ſpeak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn againſt thy ſervant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord aſked his ſervants, ſaying, Have ye a father or a brother?

20 And we ſaid unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou ſaidſt unto thy ſervants, Bring him down unto me, that I may ſet mine eyes upon him.

22 And we ſaid unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he ſhould leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou ſaidſt unto thy ſervants, Except your youngeſt brother come down with you, you ſhall ſee my face no more.

24 And it came to paſs, when we came up unto thy ſervant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father ſaid, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we ſaid, We cannot go down: if our youngeſt brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not ſee the man's face, except our youngeſt brother *be* with us.

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of ſome ſuch language; which favoured his deſign of proving their affection for Benjamin.

V. 14. *They fell before him*, &c.] Now indeed Joſeph had the dominion over them, according to their interpretation of his dreams. (xxxvii. 8.)

V. 15. *Wot ye not*, &c?] We may be ſure Joſeph did not uſe divination, the criminality of which may hereafter be evinced: but he merely, as a ſuppoſed Egyptian, pretended to it, in order to conceal the real reaſon of his having ſo readily detected them.

V. 16. *God hath found out*, &c.] Perhaps Judah inwardly meant their former guilt, which was now viſited upon them. Conſcious of his own innocence in this matter, he very prudently waved all mention of it, whatever he thought: for otherwiſe he muſt either have allowed Benjamin's guilt, or have reflected on Joſeph's equity.

V. 17. *Get you up*, &c.] At this time the experiment was at the criſis, and doubtleſs Joſeph anxiouſly expected the event.

V. 18. *Even as Pharaoh.*] That is equally to be reſpected, and feared. We ſhould keep the dreams ſtill in mind: Joſeph's brethren ſoon learned what was become of them. (xxxvii. 20.) Judah being entruſted with Benjamin, and perhaps more affectionate than the reſt both to him and his father; and having conceived the generous deſign mentioned in the cloſe, aſſumed the office of ſpeaker in the name of the reſt.—Probably they alſo expreſſed their concurrence, when he had concluded.

V. 20. *His brother Is dead*, &c.] Joſeph had been long dead to his father; and his brethren had ſo long been accuſtomed to ſpeak of him as dead, that they ſeem to have forgot, that it was falſe or uncertain.—Every word in this verſe is ſimplicity and pathos itſelf. No man of the leaſt taſte or ſenſibility can read it, at this diſtance of time, without great emotion.—Indeed the whole ſpeech is exquiſitely beautiful: had Joſeph been merely an humane judge, and no relation; and had Benjamin been guilty, ſuch natural eloquence muſt have been irreſiſtibly forcible: with what feelings then muſt Joſeph have heard him!—When we read this generous ſpeech, we forgive Judah all the paſt, and cannot refuſe to ſay, "Thou art he, whom thy brethren "ſhall praiſe." (xlix. 8.)

V. 26. *We cannot go down*, &c.] Judah had ſaid, *we will not*; but he here mollified the harſhneſs of that expreſſion.

27 And thy ſervant my father ſaid unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *ſons*.

28 And the one went out from me, and I ſaid, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I ſaw him not ſince.

29 And if ye take this alſo from me, and miſchief befal him, ye ſhall bring down my gray hairs with ſorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy ſervant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; (ſeeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life:)

31 It ſhall come to paſs, when he ſeeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy ſervants ſhall bring down the gray hairs of thy ſervant our father with ſorrow to the grave.

32 For thy ſervant became ſurety for the lad unto my father; ſaying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I ſhall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy ſervant abide, inſtead of the lad, a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how ſhall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? leſt peradventure I ſee the evil that ſhall come on my father.

CHAP.

V. 28. *And I ſaid ſurely*, &c.] Judah touched on this ſubject with a kind of trembling heſitation: as a part of his plea it muſt not be omitted: yet his conſcience ſeems to make him faulter in reporting Jacob's language, which he knew reſulted from a deception. It is ſurpriſing that Joſeph could refrain on hearing this!

V. 30. *Seeing that his life*, &c.] Nothing can exceed the tender affection expreſſed for Jacob in this ſpeech; which confirms the ſentiment, that from the diſcovery of Judah's inceſt with Tamar, he had been a true penitent, and conſequently a more dutiful ſon than before.

V. 31. *Thy ſervants*, &c.] It might be feared, that the ſorrowful tidings would quite overwhelm Jacob, and cauſe his immediate death. Perhaps Judah conſidered their former guilt reſpecting Joſeph, as the cauſe of this ſevere viſitation; and as the means of rendering the affliction of loſing Benjamin inſupportable to Jacob. In deep anguiſh of conſcience, he ſeems to have apprehended, that he and his brethren would actually be chargeable in the ſight of God with the guilt of murduring their father.

V. 33. *Inſtead of the lad, a bondman*, &c.] Judah would be as uſeful a ſervant as Benjamin; Joſeph would be no loſer; his father could perhaps ſurvive the loſs of him; and he was willing to ſubmit to any hardſhip, rather than occaſion and witneſs his aged father's death.—Perhaps the annals of the whole world do not produce an inſtance of more heroic and diſintereſted affection, in a mere man. Some would even dare to die for a beloved or honoured friend, who nevertheleſs would not willingly ſubmit to be a ſlave for life to ranſom him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who have been guilty of deceit and injuſtice, muſt blame themſelves, when they are afterwards ſuſpected, and put upon repreated trials, before they recover the confidence of thoſe whom they have injured: but if they be at length ſincere, the event will make amends for the ſevereſt ſcrutiny.—Though open and direct meaſures are generally preferable: yet in ſome caſes ſtratagems are lawful, and never more ſo, than when they are intended for the benefit of the perſons for whom they are laid; in order that being foiled at their own weapons, they may remember and repent of their own treacherous dealings.—To reward evil for good is ſo evidently baſe, that nothing can be urged in excuſe of it: how then ſhall we ſtand in judgment before that God, whom we have ſo ungratefully requited for his multiplied benefits? Men think it hard to be ſuſpected of crimes, which are contrary to a few of the overt actions of their lives: though they are inwardly conſcious of much worſe, which they conceal from their fellow-creatures. Yet conſcious innocence has no occaſion to fear a fair trial: but as all hearts are totally concealed from us, except our own, we ſhould be cautious in anſwering for others alſo: and they who are moſt confident in ſelf-juſtification, may ſoon have their mouths ſtopped, and ſcarcely know what to ſay.—If before the powerful of the earth it is ſometimes prudent to wave the queſtion of right, and to make our appeal to their compaſſion and generoſity, and never ſafe to impeach or reflect upon their equity: much more ſhould we ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God; and renouncing all other pleas, caſt ourſelves upon his infinite compaſſion; for he is perfectly righteous, and will be acknowledged to be ſo, by all who would approach him with acceptance.—In many caſes, undiſſembled narrations form the moſt concluſive and affecting arguments: ſuch addreſſes to the tender paſſions, as are grounded upon evident reaſon, truth, and fact, and carry with them internal teſtimony of diſintereſtedneſs, generoſity, and relative affection, are almoſt irreſiſtible. And amongſt the reſt the glow of filial affection, through manly ſenſe and fortitude, has a peculiar beauty and energy.—How careful ſhould children be not to grieve their parents, leſt by embittering their infirm age, they ſhould ſhorten their days, and be indicted now at the bar of their own conſciences, or hereafter at the judgment ſeat of God, for the horrible crime of parracide; which many are guilty of, who never ſuſpect themſelves, or are ſuſpected by others! True penitents will ſhew that a total revolution has taken place in their principles and practice: were it poſſible they would undo; and therefore they will endeavour to make amends for, and to prevent the further ill effects of, their former miſconduct, though in the moſt ſelf-denying manner: and this will evidence that their ſins are pardoned, and prepare the way for their receiving the comfort of it.—Thus Jeſus, the antitype, proceeds to humble and prove his people, even after they have had ſome taſtes of his loving kindneſs; thus he brings their ſins renewedly to their remembrance, that they may exerciſe and evidence their repentance; thus

CHAP. XLV.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſeph making himſelf known to his brethren, their confuſion, his kindneſs, and meſſage to his father, v. 1—16. *2d. Pharaoh's behaviour and propoſal on the occaſion, v.* 17—20. *3d. Joſeph diſmiſſing his brethren with proviſions and counſel, v.* 21—24. *4th. Their relation of the matter to Jacob, with it's effects upon him, v.* 25—28.

THEN Joſeph could not refrain himſelf before all them that ſtood by him; and he cried, Cauſe every man to go out from me: and there ſtood no man with him, while Joſeph made himſelf known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the houſe of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, I *am* Joſeph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not anſwer him: for they were troubled at his preſence.

4 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near: and he ſaid, I *am* Joſeph your brother, whom ye ſold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourſelves, that ye ſold me hither: for God did ſend me before you to preſerve life.

6 For theſe two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land; and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there ſhall* neither *be* earing nor harveſt.

7 And God ſent me before you, to preſerve you a poſterity in the earth, and to ſave your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* ſent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his houſe, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haſte

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thus he tries, that he may manifeſt, their graces: thus his bowels yearn over them, whilſt his face wears a frown, and his hand holds the rod; and thus by rebukes and chaſtenings, he prepares them for comfort here, and glory hereafter.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLV.] V. 3. *I am*, &c.] Joſeph had doubtleſs been addreſſed, and ſpoken of by his Egyptian name, or by his titles of office: ſo that though the hiſtorian all along calls him by that name, probably his brethren had had never heard it before, from any perſon in Egypt.—It is impoſſible that the tongue, the pen, or the pencil, can ever do juſtice to the mixed emotions of ſurpriſe, fear, grief, remorſe, hope, natural affection, joy, &c, which muſt alternately, yet almoſt at the ſame inſtant, have ſeized upon their minds at this unexpected diſcovery.—But it ſeems that Joſeph perceived, that confuſion and terror were likely to predominate, and to fill them with apprehenſion, that he would now avenge the injuſtice and cruelty, of which they had been guilty;—therefore he proceeded in the language and demeanour of love.

V. 4. *When ye ſold*, &c.] The name of Joſeph would probably have led them to a recollection of his features and voice: yet the mention of this circumſtance was neceſſary, (though painful,) both to remove all doubts of his being their brother; and alſo to introduce the kind attempt he intended to make, to obviate their fears, and to inſpire confidence and comfort.—Perhaps he called them near to him, leſt the Egyptians ſhould overhear this circumſtance, with which it was not proper they ſhould be acquainted.

V. 5. *Be not*, &c.] Every paſſion has its proper boundaries, which it ought not to exceed. The ſkillful phyſician, though in his intention of cure he aims to produce an effect, yet having produced it, he will often ſee occaſion to check, and even ſometimes to counteract his firſt intention; leſt it prove exceſſive, and expoſe the patient to the oppoſite danger. Joſeph's intention had been to humble and to reprove his brethren, to bring their ſin to remembrance, to fill them with remorſe for it; and to evince that they really repented, and were not diſpoſed to repeat their crime.—But having produced theſe effects, he perceived from their confuſion and diſmay, that they were in danger of being overwhelmed of over-much ſorrow, and of ſinking under deſpondency: therefore he endeavoured to comfort and encourage them. (1 *Cor.* v. 1—5. 2 *Cor.* ii. 6—11.) And indeed, not only would the authority of one whom they had ſo groſly injured, affright them; but the excellency of his character, the reputation he had acquired, and the accompliſhment of thoſe dreams, as divine predictions, which they had contemptuouſly oppoſed, would ſhew their crime more horrid than before they ſaw it; and all together might render them ready to conclude, that they had ſinned beyond the reach of forgiveneſs.—Though the merciful purpoſes of God in ſending him into Egypt by no means excuſed their ſin, and therefore ought not to have prevented their humiliation and repentance; yet it might very properly abate their anguiſh of ſpirit, and encourage their hope of pardon from ſo gracious a God: and it might aſſure them of Joſeph's forgiveneſs, who clearly ſaw the wiſdom, and richly experienced the goodneſs of God in that event; and thus might turn their deſpondency into believing prayers, and their ſelf-indignation into admiring gratitude.

V. 8. *So now*, &c.] This was, as if Joſeph had ſaid 'Pore no longer upon your own miſconduct in that affair: 'but ſee and admire the wonderful contrivance of God in 'it, who ſent me hither for ſuch important benefits, eſpe-'cially to you and your families.'—He was made a father

to

9 Haſte you and go up to my father, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith thy ſon Joſeph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not.

19 And thou ſhalt dwell in the land of Goſhen, and thou ſhalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou haſt.

11 And there will I nouriſh thee (for yet *there are* five years of famine): leſt thou, and thy houſhold, and all that thou haſt, come to poverty.

12 And behold, your eyes ſee, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that ſpeaketh unto you.

13 And you ſhall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have ſeen; and ye ſhall haſte, and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kiſſed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's houſe, ſaying, Joſeph's brethren are come: and it pleaſed Pharaoh well, and his ſervants.

17 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beaſts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan.

18 And take your father, and your houſholds, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye ſhall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you waggons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come.

20 Alſo regard not your ſtuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* your's.

21 And the children of Iſrael did ſo: and Joſeph gave them waggons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them proviſion for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of ſilver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he ſent after this *manner*; ten aſſes laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten ſhe aſſes laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he ſent his brethren away, and they departed: and he ſaid unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father.

26 And told him, ſaying, Joſeph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joſeph, which he had ſaid unto them: and when he ſaw the waggons which Joſeph had ſent to carry him, the ſpirit of Jacob their father revived.

28 And Iſrael ſaid, *It is* enough: Joſeph my ſon *is* yet alive: I will go and ſee him before I die.

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to Pharaoh, as the inſtrument of God in preſerving him and his kingdom.

V. 13 *Tell my father*, &c.] This direction was given, not in oſtentation, but to rejoice Jacob's heart, and encourage him to come down into Egypt.

V. 15. *Kiſſed them*, &c.] As a token of entire reconciliation.

V. 16. *It pleaſed Pharaoh well, and his ſervants.*] This is a concluſive teſtimony how much Joſeph was eſteemed, and how little he was envied.

V. 20. *Your ſtuff*, &c.] Such furniture, &c, as could not conveniently be removed ſo far.

V. 22. *To Benjamin*, &c.] Thus Joſeph ſtill continued the trial of his brethren; to ſee whether or not they were diſpoſed to envy Benjamin.

V. 24. *See that*, &c.] It would be natural for them to converſe together concerning Joſeph's being ſold, and of the account that they muſt give Jacob reſpecting it: and as ſome of them had been much more criminal in that matter than others, this might eaſily produce altercations, and quarrels of fatal conſequence.

V. 28. *It is enough*, &c. 'I ſhall then account myſelf to have lived long enough.'

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Jacob's ſacrifices, and encouraging viſion, v. 1—4. 2d. His journey with his family into Egypt, v. 5—7. 3d. The names, and the number of his deſcendants, v. 8—27. 4th. His meeting and conference with Joſeph, v. 28—34.

AND Iſrael took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-ſheba, and offered ſacrifices unto the God of his father Iſaac.

2 And God ſpake unto Iſrael in the viſions of the night, and ſaid, Jacob, Jacob: And he ſaid, Here *am* I.

3 And he ſaid, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up *again:* and Joſeph ſhall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob roſe up from Beer-ſheba: and the ſons of Iſrael carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the waggons

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In endeavouring to render men ſenſible of their faults, we ſhould be careful not needleſsly to expoſe them before others.—True excellency does not conſiſt in being devoid of paſſions; but in having the ſtrongeſt of them under the government of reaſon and conſcience; ſo as to know how to refrain, and how to yield to them with prudence and expediency: and true wiſdom diſcovers itſelf very much, in being able to ſuit our conduct and converſation to the perſons with whom we have to do, and to the circumſtances in which they are placed. In ſpeaking to men about the concerns of their ſouls, the two grand objects are, to awaken the careleſs conſcience to an adequate ſenſe of guilt and danger; and to inſpire the burdened and deſponding heart with the hope of pardon and peace. It is very profitable for us to obſerve the footſteps of Providence, and to note how infinite wiſdom and goodneſs deduce the moſt beneficial effects from the crimes and follies of men; eſpecially we ſhould in this view ſtudy the hiſtory of our own lives: and we ſhall not want proof, that the only wiſe God hath over-ruled many of our miſtakes and ſins to our important good; and thus we may alſo perceive the outlines of *his* plan, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will. This review cannot reaſonably lead us to entertain a ſlighter ſenſe of the evil of ſin, or better thoughts of ourſelves; it cannot encourage us to go on in diſobedience, or leſſen our humiliation and ſelf-abaſement: rather it will convince us the more of our own ignorance and folly, and render us more aſhamed of offending againſt ſo kind a benefactor. But it will prevent our deſpairing of forgiveneſs; check that ſorrow, which unfits for duty and damps our gratitude; and excite that admiration, love, and confidence, which produce chearful obedience.—We ſhould ever manifeſt brotherly love, even to thoſe who have treated us injuriouſly; and ſhew ourſelves ready to forgive, and in haſte to diſperſe thoſe fears and jealouſies, which the recollection of paſt offences may excite; as uniting the moſt compaſſionate affection, with our faithful attempts to make men ſenſible that they have offended.—But what haſte ſhould children make, and what gratification ſhould they account it, to contribute to the comfort of their tender parents! They ſhould check every mean deſire, and ſpur themſelves on to every laudable purſuit, with the idea, that the one will grieve and the other gladden a kind parent's heart. They ought to value proſperity eſpecially as enabling them to ſhare it with them; and ſpare a conſiderable portion even of a moderate proviſion, to requite the cares, toils, and anxieties of an aged father and mother. How ſhamefully unlike Joſeph are they, who in comparative affluence, through pride, covetouſneſs, or ſelf-indulgence, neglect and leave to languiſh in indigence, ſuch near relations!—O! how it adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour, when believers, by a blameleſs, uſeful, and prudent conduct, conciliate the good-will of many, and ſilence the reproaches of all!—If men may without injuſtice confer unmerited favours on whom, and in what proportion they pleaſe; who ſhall dare to find fault, if our *righteous* God, puniſhing none above their deſervings, has mercy on whom he will have mercy? When the reaſons of the divine appointments are made known to us, we ſhall clearly perceive the Lord's wiſdom, love, and faithfulneſs; we ſhall know that all thoſe things are for us which once we thought againſt us, and that our murmurs ſprung from ignorance, and unbelief; and we ſhall ſay, 'It is enough, I am 'now ſatisfied:' in the exerciſe of faith we ſhould therefore endeavour to anticipate that diſcovery.—Here alſo we behold Jeſus, manifeſting himſelf as a brother and friend to thoſe, who once were his deſpiſers, enemies, and in ſome ſenſe his murderers, having previouſly humbled them in true repentance; preventing moſt kindly their diſmay and confuſion; aſſuring them of his love, and of the proviſions of his grace; explaining to them the myſteries of his croſs, and the deſigns of the Father in his ſufferings and glory; admitting them into ſweet fellowſhip with himſelf; bidding them go, and inform others of his love and grace, that they may come and ſhare it alſo; commanding them to lay aſide envy, anger, malice, and contention, and live in peace with each other; teaching them willingly to renounce the world for him, and his fulneſs; giving them earneſts of his love, and ſupplying all that is needful to bring them home to himſelf, that where he is, there they may be alſo. And though when he ſends for his people by death as his meſſenger, they may *at firſt* feel ſome diſcouraging apprehenſions; yet the thoughts of ſeeing his glory, and being with him, will enable them at length to ſay, 'it is enough;—I am willing to die, and go to ſee, and be with, the beloved of my ſoul.'

waggons which Pharaoh had ſent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his ſeed with him;

7 His ſons and his ſons' ſons with him, his daughters, and his ſons' daughters, and all his ſeed brought he with him into Egypt.

8 And theſe *are* the names of the children of Iſrael, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his ſons: Reuben Jacob's firſt-born.

9 And the ſons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

10 And the ſons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the ſon of a Canaanitiſh woman.

11 And the ſons of Levi; Gerſhon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 And the ſons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: But Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the ſons of Pharez, were Hezron, and Hamul.

13 And the ſons of Iſſachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron.

14 And the ſons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.

15 Theſe *be* the ſons of Leah, which ſhe bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the ſouls of his ſons and his daughters *were* thirty and three.

16 And the ſons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggai, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

17 And the ſons of Aſher; Jimnah, and Iſhuah, and Iſui, and Beriah, and Serah their ſiſter: And the ſons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel.

18 Theſe *are* the ſons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and theſe ſhe bare unto Jacob, *even* ſixteen ſouls.

19 The ſons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joſeph, and Benjamin.

20 And unto Joſeph in the land of Egypt were born Manaſſeh and Ephraim, which Aſenath the daughter of Potipherah prieſt of On bare unto him.

21 And the ſons of Benjamin *were* Belah, and Becher, and Aſhbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Roſh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

22 Theſe *are* the ſons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the ſouls *were* fourteen.

23 And the ſons of Dan; Huſhim.

24 And the ſons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.

25 Theſe *are* the ſons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and ſhe bare theſe unto Jacob: all the ſouls *were* ſeven.

26 All the ſouls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, beſides Jacob's ſons' wives, all the ſouls *were* threeſcore and ſix;

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVI.] V. 1. *Beer-ſheba*, &c.] Perhaps Jacob choſe this place, as having been frequently the ſcene of his father's communion with God; or as the laſt place in Canaan, which he was now leaving never to ſee again. Probably, though he ſpake at firſt with ſuch rapture of going to ſee Joſeph: yet reflecting that Iſaac was forbidden to go down to Egypt, and recollecting the revelation made to Abraham, of the oppreſſion which his poſterity were there to endure; he pauſed, before he finally left Canaan, and with ſolemn ſacrifices ſought both direction and protection, if the Lord allowed him to proceed.

V. 4. *Surely*, &c.] God would ſurely bring Jacob back again to Canaan, *in his poſterity*, of which his burial in Canaan was an earneſt: and Joſeph alſo would be preſent with him in his dying moments, to cloſe his eyes.

V. 21. *The ſons of Benjamin.*] From other Scriptures, (*Numb.* xxvi. 2. 1 *Chron.* viii. 3—5,) we learn that ſeveral of theſe were Benjamin's grand-children. Benjamin was evidently born after Dinah had been defiled; and ſhe was about Joſeph's age: ſuppoſing her therefore but in her fourteenth year at that time, Benjamin could not at this time be more than 26 or 27 years old, ſo that it is ſcarcely conceivable he could have had ſeveral grand-children.—It is therefore moſt probable, that the hiſtorian mentions ſome born in Egypt, during Jacob's life-time, who afterwards became heads of families in Iſrael. The ſame ſeems the eaſieſt way of accounting for the mention here made of Judah's grand-children by Tamar, of whom he begat Pharez, after the death of Er and Onan, who had both been married to her: though Judah at this time ſeems to have been under 50 years of age.

27 And

27 And the ſons of Joſeph which were born him in Egypt, *were* two ſouls: all the ſouls of the houſe of Jacob, which came into Egypt, *were* three ſcore and ten.

28 And he ſent Judah before him unto Joſeph, to direct his face unto Goſhen; and they came into the land of Goſhen.

29 And Joſeph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Iſrael his father, to Goſhen: and preſented himſelf unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Now let me die, ſince I have ſeen thy face, becauſe thou *art* yet alive.

31 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, and to his father's houſe, I will go up and ſhew Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, My brethren, and my father's houſe, which *were* in the land of Canaan, are come unto me.

32 And the men *are* ſhepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it ſhall come to paſs when Pharaoh ſhall call you, and ſhall ſay, What *is* your occupation?

34 That ye ſhall ſay, Thy ſervants' trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we *and* alſo our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goſhen; for every ſhepherd *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

CHAP. XLVII.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſeph's preſenting firſt his Brethren, and then his Father, to Pharaoh, with their conference, v. 1—10. 2d. His ſupporting them in Egypt, v. 11—12. 3d. The conduct of Joſeph towards the Egyptians, and their gratitude, v. 13—26. 4th. Jacob on the approach of death calling Joſeph, and giving orders concerning his burial, v. 27—31.

THEN Joſeph came and told Pharaoh, and ſaid, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold they are in the land of Goſhen.

2 And he took ſome of his brethren, *even* five men, and preſented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And

V. 27.] Threeſcore and ſix were before mentioned: ſo that Joſeph and his two ſons, together with Jacob himſelf, complete the 70 here enumerated: yet Stephen, full of the Holy Ghoſt, quoting from the Septuagint, ſays, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls; which gives us the hint not to occupy much of our attention about ſuch critical niceties, but to proceed with matters more important. (Note *Acts* vii. 9—16.)

V. 28. *To direct*, &c.] To give Joſeph notice of his arrival, that he might be reminded to meet him in Goſhen.

V. 29. *Chariot*, &c.] As a prince, Joſeph went forth to meet his father in a chariot, thereby ſhewing him proper reſpect: but for Jacob, always a plain man and now an old man, he ſends a convenient but leſs ſplendid conveyance.

V. 34. *Abomination*, &c.] (Note xliii. 32.) This would more effectually keep them diſtinct and ſeparate from the Egyptians.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In thoſe events and undertakings that appear moſt joyful, there are probable conſequences involved, which may remind us to rejoice with trembling; and warn us not to proceed without ſeeking counſel, aſſiſtance, and a bleſſing from the Lord. Attending on his ordinances, and receiving the pledges of his covenant love, we may expect his preſence, and that peace which it confers: and when we are ſatisfied that we are his people, and in the path which he marks out to us, being aſſured of his ſupports and conſolations, we may not only venture into the iron furnace of bondage and oppreſſion, but into the fiery furnace of perſecution. In all our removals, we need to be reminded of our removal out of this world: and though it be deſirable to be ſurrounded at the eve of life with our beloved friends and children; yet nothing can encourage us to fear no evil, when paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death, but the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt to cloſe our eyes, and receive our ſouls.—Be our families ever ſo large, God's providence can with perfect eaſe ſupport them: and be repenting ſinners ever ſo numerous, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt are ſufficient, and in Heaven there is room enough for them all. However generous our friends may be, it is prudent to be modeſt, and not to give them any ground to ſuſpect us of encroaching, or to complain that we are burdenſome. In general, the further from courts, the nearer to Canaan; and however obſcure and deſpiſed our lot be, if it be advantageous to our ſouls, and favourable to communion with God, we ought to be thankful for it. Our lives are in the Lord's hands, whatever we wiſh and deſire; and though we ſhould be willing to die, yet we ſhould be alſo willing to wait his time. In the mean while, if even the abhorrence of the world keep us ſeparate from it, we have cauſe to rejoice and be glad on that account.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVII.] V. 2. *Took ſome of*, &c.] Joſeph, by thus preſenting his brethren, both ſhewed reſpect to Pharaoh, and intimated that he would do nothing without his

3 And Pharaoh ſaid unto his brethren, What *is* your occupation? And they ſaid unto Pharaoh, Thy ſervants *are* ſhepherds, both we *and* alſo our fathers.

4 They ſaid moreover unto Pharaoh, For to ſojourn in the land are we come: for thy ſervants have no paſture for their flocks, for the famine *is* ſore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee let thy ſervants dwell in the land of Goſhen.

5 And Pharaoh ſpake unto Joſeph, ſaying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee.

6 The land of Egypt *is* before thee; in the beſt of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goſhen let them dwell: and if thou knoweſt any men of activity amongſt them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joſeph brought in Jacob his father, and ſet him before Pharaoh: and Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Jacob, How old *art* thou?

9 And Jacob ſaid unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And

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knowledge and approbation; and put honour upon them, manifeſting that he was not aſhamed of them, though now his inferiors; and that he did not harbour reſentment againſt them, though formerly injurious.—He had doubtleſs good reaſon for ſelecting five from among his brethren; though we are not acquainted with them, nor even with the names of thoſe whom he preſented.—Thus Chriſt diſpenſeth his ſpecial favours to every one, ſeverally as he will; not without reaſons, but without informing us of them: and thus, neither deſpiſing our meanneſs, nor reſenting our former contempt and perverſeneſs, nor being aſhamed to call us brethren, he preſents us redeemed ſinners before his Father's throne.

V. 3. *What is*, &c?] Pharaoh took it for granted that Jacob's ſons had ſome peculiar occupation.—This would be evident from their appearance; and indeed every one who would not be worthleſs and an uſeleſs incumbrance upon the public, ſhould have ſome employment.—Though a ſhepherd was had in abomination among the Egyptians, yet they attempted not to conceal their occupation. Whatever the maxims of the world, and the faſhion of the time may be, every honeſt calling is honourable; and a man ſhould be aſhamed of nothing, at any time or in any place, which is not diſgraceful in the judgment of God, and of wiſe and good men.

V. 4. *To ſojourn*, &c.] Probably Jacob and his ſons only meant to ſojourn in Egypt till the famine was over; but meeting with kind treatment, they tarried till another King aroſe; and at length they were detained in bondage. This was indeed *beſides their purpoſe*, but according to the purpoſe and prediction of God.

V. 6. *In the beſt land*, &c.] This was done in gratitude to Joſeph, of whoſe ſervices Pharaoh ſeems to have been fully ſenſible. But he would have none but men of activity preferred even in this line.—It does not ſeem to have been the cuſtom at courts at that time, to prefer the dependents of great ſtateſmen, out of compliment to them, whether fit for ſuch preferment or not; as has ſince unhappily been too much the caſe. Joſeph did not require, Pharaoh did not propoſe, neither did the ſons of Jacob expect any advancement: they only deſired and were contented with paſturage for their flocks. We muſt allow, that if the rich and great are often diſpoſed to overlook and neglect their poor relatives; they on the other hand are equally culpable, in expecting ſuch things from them, as it would be very improper to confer.—The cattle of the Egyptians were kept for various uſes, and ſlain in ſacrifice, though not at other times eaten, as it is generally ſuppoſed.

V. 7. *Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh.*] With the gravity of old age, and the piety of a true believer, and even with the authority of a patriarch and a prophet, Jacob pronounced a bleſſing upon Pharaoh; that is, he *ſolemnly* ſupplicated the Lord to beſtow his bleſſing upon him. Thus he acted in character, as a man who was not aſhamed of his religion; and who, *in his own way*, would expreſs his gratitude, and recompenſe, as far as he could, the benefactor of himſelf and family, with a prophet's reward. And though Jacob, by ſo doing, in ſome ſenſe aſſumed the ſuperiority, (*Heb.* vii. 7.) yet Pharaoh ſeems to have been well pleaſed with this token of his regard: having, in the character and uſefulneſs of Joſeph, abundantly experienced the value of the bleſſing of Jacob's God; and perhaps being himſelf favourably diſpoſed to his worſhip.

V. 8. *How old art thou?*] Probably Pharaoh obſerved ſomewhat peculiarly venerable in the aſpect of Jacob; and conceiving that he was older than indeed he was, (to which appearance his various hardſhips and trials might contribute) he was curious to know his age.

V. 9. *The days of the years*, &c.] We have here a very uncommon anſwer given to a very common queſtion: but it is an anſwer full of pertinent inſtruction and admonition. Jacob calls his life a pilgrimage; that is, the ſojourning of a ſtranger in a foreign country, or his journey home to his own country; intimating that he was not at home upon earth,

10 And Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 And Joſeph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a poſſeſſion in the land of Egypt, in the beſt of the land, in the land of Rameſes, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joſeph nouriſhed his father and his brethren, and all his father's houſhold with bread according to *their* families.

13 And *there was* no bread in all the land: for the famine *was* very ſore, ſo that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reaſon of the famine.

14 And Joſeph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joſeph brought the money into Pharaoh's houſe.

15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joſeph, and ſaid, Give us bread: for why ſhould we die in thy preſence? for the money faileth.

16 And Joſeph ſaid, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joſeph: and Joſeph gave them bread in *exchange* for horſes, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the aſſes; and he fed them with bread, for all the cattle, for that year.

18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the ſecond year, and ſaid unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is ſpent, my lord alſo hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the ſight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands.

19 Wherefore ſhall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be ſervants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* ſeed, that we may live and not die, that the land be not deſolate.

20 And Joſeph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians ſold every man his field, becauſe the famine prevailed over them: ſo the land became Pharaoh's.

21 And as for the people he removed them to cities, from *one* end of the borders of Egypt, even to the *other* end thereof.

22 Only the land of the prieſts bought he not: for the prieſts had a portion *aſſigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they ſold not their lands.

23 Then Joſeph ſaid unto the people, Behold

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earth; and that his habitation, his inheritance, and his treaſures were in Heaven, whither he was daily journeying in the bent and deſires of his heart, and the tenor of his conduct. "For they which ſay ſuch things confeſs that they 'ſeek a better, that is a heavenly country." (*Heb.* xi. 13—16.) Again, he numbers his life "by the days of his years:" A few years, each year compoſed of a few days: one day goes, and another, and ſoon a year is gone: and thus one year glides away after another, till life is ended, with its many ſorrows, and its few pleaſures; juſt as a weariſome journey gradually is finiſhed, and we arrive at home. Though he had now lived 130 years; yet he accounts them but few, in compariſon of the lives of his forefathers; and much more compared with eternity: they were *evil* alſo, not only as the lives of others are, but in that he had had an uncommon ſhare of troubles. Such an anſwer, from ſo venerable a perſon, could not fail to impreſs the mind of Pharaoh, and almoſt to extort the reluctant ſigh, by reminding him of the inſufficiency and ſhort continuance of all human proſperity and felicity; and that after a life of vanity and vexation, man goes down into the grave, equally from the throne as from the cottage; and that nothing can make him happy, but the proſpect of an everlaſting home in Heaven, after the cloſe of his ſhort weary pilgrimage on earth.

V. 11. *In the beſt of the land.*] Egypt lying low might perhaps afford good paſturage, eſpecially in the plains near the Nile; though the upland countries were totally burnt up during the years of famine: but there was not any where moiſture enough to encourage ſowing corn.

V. 13. *Fainted*, &c.] A ſtrong metaphor, taken from the fainting of an individual for want of ſuſtenance, and applied, in a manner emphatically deſcriptive, to the diſtreſs of the whole nation.

V. 14. *Into Pharaoh's houſe.*] None of it being appropriated to his own uſe, or given in preſents or penſions to his family.

V. 21. *He removed them*, &c.] The ſtate of affairs in Egypt might require ſuch regulations; and it might conduce to public tranquillity, and to the more equitable diſtribution of property, thus to wean them from their former lands, and habitations, and after the expiration of the famine to aſſign them others, as it ſeemed beſt.—But perhaps he only removed the inhabitants of the villages to the neareſt cities, in order to ſupply them more conveniently from the ſtorehouſes, till the famine was paſt.

V. 22. *Prieſts*, &c.] This word is ſometimes tranſlated princes; and ſeems here uſed not only for the miniſters of their ſuperſtitious worſhip, but for the officers of ſtate,

hold, I have bought you this day, and your *land* for Pharaoh: lo, here *is* ſeed for you, and ye ſhall ſow the land.

24 And it ſhall come to paſs in the increaſe, that you ſhall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts ſhall be your own, for ſeed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your houſholds, and for food for your little ones.

25 And they ſaid, Thou haſt ſaved our lives: let us find grace in the ſight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's ſervants.

26 And Joſeph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, *that* Pharaoh ſhould have the fifth *part*; except the land of the prieſts only, *which* became not Pharaoh's.

27 And Iſrael dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goſhen; and they had poſſeſſions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt ſeventeen years: for the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and ſeven years.

29 And the time drew nigh that Iſrael muſt die: and he called his ſon Joſeph, and ſaid unto him, If now I have found grace in thy ſight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt.

30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou ſhalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he ſaid, I will do as thou haſt ſaid.

31 And he ſaid, Swear unto me: And he ſware unto him, And Iſrael bowed himſelf upon the bed's head.

CHAP.

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and for their wiſe men and diviners, who having their maintenance from Pharaoh, would not be under the neceſſity of ſelling their lands.

V. 24. *A fifth part*, &c.] Our land tax at its preſent rate would be one fifth of the rent, if it were equally levied; but this is the fifth of the clear produce, which is much more: yet as taken in lieu of all other taxes it does not appear exorbitant.

V. 25. *Thou haſt ſaved*, &c.] We ſhould not judge of this tranſaction by the rules of modern politics: it is plain that the Egyptians regarded Joſeph as a public benefactor; and though we may not perceive the reaſon of ſome arrangements; yet the whole tranſaction is ſtrongly marked with an equity, benevolence, diſintereſtedneſs, and impartiality, which have ſeldom, if ever, been equalled. The whole appears conſiſtent with Joſeph's character, as acting betwixt Pharaoh and his ſubjects in the fear of God; and without any undue attachment to the intereſts of his brethren, or even of his own children, whom we find not in better circumſtances than the other Iſraelites.

V. 29. *Muſt die*, &c.] Jacob was ſenſible that death was now ſpeedily approaching, and he greatly deſired the preſence of his beloved Joſeph; who lived at court, whilſt Jacob was at a conſiderable diſtance: and not even affection to his parent could induce Joſeph to relax his unremitting attention to the important duties of his ſtation.—Jacob's dying requeſt, "not to be buried in Egypt," evidenced his belief of the Lord's promiſe concerning Canaan, of which land he would thus take and keep poſſeſſion; and alſo intimated, that he deſired to have his lot after death, not with the Egyptians, but with his fathers Abraham and Iſaac, in that heavenly reſt which Canaan typified.

V. 31. *Iſrael bowed*, &c.] In an act of ſolemn worſhip, yet in feebleneſs thus ſupporting himſelf, and expreſſing his full ſatisfaction, and his willingneſs to leave the world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The kindneſs of liberal benefactors, ſo far from encouraging us to encroach upon them, ſhould remind us to ſhew them all proper attention and deference: and in attending to ſome *peculiar relative duties*, we ſhould look round upon the *whole circle*, and ſo proportion them as not to entrench upon others.—Though diligence is exceedingly commendable, and generally is connected with advancement in life; yet it is ordinarily beſt to abide with God in our own proper calling: for what the world calls *mending ourſelves*, is frequently little better than renouncing peace, content, and a ſituation favourable to the proſperity of our ſouls, for gilded cares, incumbrances, and manifold temptations.—Indeed our life is but a pilgrimage, few and evil are the days of it; and if they are ſpent with God, and to his glory, the reſt matters very little. If we have a proſpect that, when we go hence and are no more ſeen, we ſhall go home to our father's houſe, we ſhall not want, and ought not to deſire, the paltry intereſts of the World; why then ſhould we burden ourſelves with unavailing cares, and ſorrows? Why covet riches, ſhortly to be left behind? Why engage in projects to be left unfiniſhed, or aſpire at diſtinctions which death will terminate? We act not thus on a journey, when our heart is at home: the conveniencies or inconveniencies, which we meet with, but little affect us or retard our progreſs; we want not to erect ſtately manſions, or lay up wealth in a foreign country, which we are leaving, and to which we ſhall return no more; nor do we encumber ourſelves with luggage, which we ſhall not need before, and which muſt be left behind, when we embark for our native country: "Having therefore food "and raiment let us be therewith content; for we brought "nothing into this World, neither may we carry any thing "out."—But O how miſerable are they, who have all *their* good things during the few and evil days of this preſent life!

CHAP. XLVIII.

Contains, Jacob in his laſt ſickneſs. 1ſt. Viſited by Joſeph with his two ſons, v. 1, 2. 2d. Adopting the latter, and admitting them to an equal ſhare in the promiſed inheritance with his own children, v. 3—11. 3d. Pronouncing a prophetical bleſſing upon them, with ſome concurrent circumſtances, v. 12—20. 4th. Predicting the return of his family to Canaan, and leaving a legacy there to Joſeph, v. 21, 22.

AND it came to paſs after theſe things, that *one* told Joſeph, Behold, thy father *is* ſick: and he took with him his two ſons, Manaſſeh and Ephraim.

2 And *one* told Jacob, and ſaid, Behold, thy ſon Joſeph cometh unto thee: and Iſrael ſtrengthened himſelf, and ſat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob ſaid unto Joſeph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and bleſſed me.

4 And ſaid unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy ſeed after thee *for* an everlaſting poſſeſſion.

5 And now thy two ſons, Ephraim and Manaſſeh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they ſhall be mine.

6 And

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life! and whoſe laſt comfort is likely to expire with their dying breath!—Let us then give diligence to make our calling and election ſure; and as our days are ſo much more curtailed than Jacob's were, let us often aſk ourſelves ſeriouſly how old we are? That our life may not vaniſh, nor death approach unobſerved or unprepared for.—A hoary head is a crown of glory, only when it is found in the way of righteouſneſs; and they whoſe conſiſtency of character will bear them out, need neither be aſhamed nor afraid to bear teſtimony for God before the greateſt princes, who if wiſe will highly value their pious prayers. They, who have been exalted, cannot too carefully avoid the appearance of deſpiſing their former equals; or they, who have been injured, the appearance of reſenting former ill treatment: and when we receive kindneſs from men, we ſhould acknowledge the kindneſs of God, in raiſing us up ſuch friends.—An uſeful life conſiſts in a conſtant ſucceſſion of duties: exalted ſtations properly filled, call for unremitting labour and attention: and ſuch perſons have need of great wiſdom, firmneſs, diſintereſtedneſs, impartiality and equity, in order to ward off envy, ſilence reproach, and to keep a clear conſcience, rendering to God, to Cæſar, and to the people, each their due. But if God's providence call a man to ſuch a ſtation, he ought to ſeek, and expect that he will furniſh him with, grace ſufficient for it. If with-holding the rain from Heaven ſo ſoon reduce the moſt opulent nations to poverty and diſtreſs; how abſolute muſt our dependence be upon that God, whom we ſo often wantonly offend, and fooliſhly forget? And if Joſeph extorted this confeſſion from the Egyptians, "Thou haſt ſaved our lives;" What multitudes will gratefully ſay to Jeſus at laſt, Thou haſt ſaved our ſouls, from the moſt tremendous deſtruction, and in the ſeaſon of uttermoſt diſtreſs! The Egyptians were willing to part with all their property, and even their liberty, for the ſaving of their lives: can it then be too much, for us to count all but loſs, and part with all, at his command and for his ſake; who will thus both ſave our ſouls, and give us an hundred fold even in this preſent World? And ſurely, if ſaved by Chriſt, we ſhall willingly become at his appointment the devoted ſervants of him, and his Father; whoſe glory he conſults, in harmony with our ſalvation.—Yet they, who lived on Joſeph's proviſion, and even Jacob, who was ſo dear to him, muſt die: but Jeſus gives us the true bread, that we may eat and live for ever: to him let us come, and yield ourſelves, and when we draw near to death, he, who ſupported us through life, will meet us and aſſure us of an everlaſting inheritance. Then, on the very bed of death, we may bow down and worſhip with joyful hearts, and breathe out our ſpirits into his faithful hands, with the moſt entire ſatisfaction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVIII.] V. 1. *Behold*, &c.] As Jacob did not appear to be immediately in the ſtate of a dying perſon, Joſeph had returned to his important employments: but hearing again of his ſickneſs, and expecting his death, he went to viſit him, and took his two ſons, Manaſſeh and Ephraim, with him, either by Jacob's expreſs deſire, or in hopes that the ſolemn ſcene, together with the dying benediction and diſcourſe of the venerable Patriarch, would make ſome uſeful impreſſions upon their youthful minds. They were at this time above twenty years of age.

V. 2. *Strengthened*, &c.] Jacob being animated by the preſence of Joſeph and his ſons, exerted all his ſtrength to improve this laſt opportunity: he was alſo endued with inward ſtrength, and raiſed above himſelf by the holy Spirit, that he might utter thoſe prophecies with which he was inſpired.

V. 3. *At Luz*, &c.] Which Jacob had called Bethel. The unexpected viſit of a gracious God, in his extreme diſtreſs, could never be eraſed from his memory: and as he had already experienced much of the fulfilment of the promiſes then made to him, which he enumerated with thankfulneſs; ſo he grounded the following bleſſings on his poſterity upon them, as the warrant of his expectations.

V. 5. *Are mine, as*, &c.] That is, 'I adopt them, that 'being

6 And thy iſſue which thou begetteſt after them, ſhall be thine, *and* ſhall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the ſame *is* Beth-lehem.

8 And Iſrael beheld Joſeph's ſons, and ſaid, Who *are* theſe?

9 And Joſeph ſaid unto his father, They *are* my ſons, whom God hath given me in this *place:* And he ſaid, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bleſs them.

10 (Now the eyes of Iſrael were dim for age, *ſo that* he could not ſee:) And he brought them near unto him; and he kiſſed them, and embraced them.

11 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, I had not thought to ſee thy face: and lo, God hath ſhewed me alſo thy ſeed.

12 And Joſeph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himſelf with his face to the earth.

13 And Joſeph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Iſrael's left hand, and Manaſſeh in his left hand towards Iſrael's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him.

14 And Iſrael ſtretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manaſſeh's head: guiding his hands wittingly; for Manaſſeh *was* the firſt-born.

15 And he bleſſed Joſeph, and ſaid, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Iſaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The

'being numbered with my own ſons, they may, as heads of 'diſtinct tribes, have a proportionable ſhare in the inhe-'ritance of Canaan.' This he ſpake by the Sprit of prophecy. Conſidering Joſeph's rank in Egypt, carnal minds would have regarded this remote inheritance with the reſt of Jacob's ſons, as a very inconſiderable matter. But we do not find that Joſeph either purchaſed eſtates, or amaſſed wealth in Egypt for his ſons: not only becauſe he was diſintereſted; but becauſe he was a believer, and wanted not to attach his children to Egypt; but to lead their thoughts to Canaan, and to the inheritance of the children of Iſrael, as their proper portion. Alas, that ſo many profeſſing parents ſhould act ſo contrary to this example; and, by anxiouſly, not to ſay covetouſly, heaping up wealth for their children, ſhould teach them to forget Canaan and Iſrael, and take up with a portion in the Egypt of this world!—Jacob alſo bleſſed Joſeph's ſons (*Heb.* xi. 21,) *in faith*, and conſidered, and wiſhed *them* to conſider, that to be numbered with the ſons of Iſrael, and to have an inheritance in Canaan, was more honourable and deſirable, than to be the richeſt of Pharaoh's courtiers. Probably this was intended to lead them to unite intereſts with the Iſraelites, and to adhere to the worſhip of God, in preference to the Egyptians and their ſuperſtition, with which, in their ſtation, they were peculiarly in danger of being infected: and it ſeems to have produced the intended effect.

V. 6. *Thy iſſue, which,* &c.] We do not find that Joſeph had any other children; but if he had had any, according to this limitation, they muſt have been incorporated with the tribes of Ephraim and Manaſſeh.

V. 7. *Rachel died,* &c.] The manner, in which this is introduced, intimates how much Jacob laid that ſtroke to heart; he ſeemed ſtill to feel the anguiſh of it: and to mention it here as a reaſon of his peculiar attachment to the poſterity, which he had by her.

V. 9. *Whom God hath,* &c.] In this place, whither I was ſold as a ſlave, where I was ſo long impriſoned, and where I have received ſo many mercies. The piety of the language ſhould not paſs unnoticed.

V. 10. *Could not ſee,* &c.] Not diſtinctly.

V. 12. *He bowed himſelf,* &c.] Joſeph thus ſhewed, that his external greatneſs did not render him forgetful of the reſpect due to his father; of the veneration, to which his age and piety entitled him; or of the high value which he put upon the adoption of his children to be partakers of the promiſed bleſſings.

V. 14. *For Manaſſeh was,* &c.] Though Manaſſeh was the firſt-born, and Jacob knew it; yet under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he, by this token, gave Ephraim the preference, as before he had firſt mentioned his name. (5.)

V. 15. *He bleſſed Joſeph,* &c.] Jacob firſt bleſſed Joſeph, and then his ſons; or he bleſſed Joſeph *in bleſſing his ſons.*—Abraham and Iſaac walked before God, by habitually, and through faith, maintaining communion with him in his ordinances, devoting themſelves to his ſervice, acting as under his eye, depending on his protection, and rejoicing in his loving kindneſs and mercy.—Jacob had often been in outward ſtraits, and eſpecially with his numerous poſterity had been in great diſtreſs by famine: but God had always provided for him, and had ſent Joſeph before-hand to make preparation for him in Egypt. There God had fed him ſeventeen years in his infirm old age by Joſeph; juſt as long as he had fed Joſeph by Jacob's hand in his infancy and youth: thus enabling Joſeph to requite his parents.—This divine inter-

GENESIS CH. XLVIII. VE. XIV.

Ryley del. Hawkins Sc.

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BRITISH
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MUSEUM

16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bleſs the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Iſaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midſt of the earth.

17 And when Joſeph ſaw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it diſpleaſed him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manaſſeh's head.

18 And Joſeph ſaid unto his father, Not ſo, my father: for this *is* the firſt-born; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refuſed, and ſaid, I know *it* my ſon, I know *it*; he alſo ſhall become a people, and he alſo ſhall be great: but truly his younger brother ſhall be greater than he, and his ſeed ſhall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he bleſſed them that day, ſaying, In thee ſhall Iſrael bleſs, ſaying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manaſſeh: and he ſet Ephraim before Manaſſeh.

21 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Behold, I die; but God ſhall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my ſword and with my bow.

CHAP.

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interpoſition was therefore very properly introduced: and as he had been fed, he complained not; though he had not been enriched, but rather impoveriſhed.

V. 16. *The Angel*, &c.] Jacob here called the God, before whom Abraham and Iſaac had walked, and who had fed him all his life long, *the Angel*. As God giveth not his glory to the creatures, we may be ſure that ſuch things were not ſpoken of a created angel. This is one proof amongſt many, that he, who is by Malachi called the Meſſenger, or Angel of the Covenant, even Jeſus Chriſt, was known as diſtinct from, yet One with, the Father by the Patriarchs; and that as ſuch he manifeſted himſelf to them, and was worſhipped by them.—The deliverances of believing ſinners from miſery and danger, by the interpoſition of the power of God, coming through the ranſom of the blood of Chriſt, are frequently in Scripture entitled redemptions.—Jacob now cloſing his eyes in death, joyfully conſidered himſelf as redeemed from *all* evil; and therefore expected henceforth good, and nothing but good.—He prayed for his grandſons, that they might ſtand in the place, inherit the privileges, and walk in the ſteps of their progenitors: which would be a NAME of nobler import, than Egypt could afford.

V. 17. *It diſpleaſed him*, &c.] Joſeph was not ſatisfied with his father's conduct; ſuppoſing that he was influenced by a groundleſs partiality, and not by the guidance of the prophetic Spirit.

V. 18. *This is*, &c.] The pre-eminence belonged to Manaſſeh by general cuſtom; and thus it was afterwards commanded in the law: Yet all through the Scriptures we have inſtances of the younger being preferred to the elder. The law teaches us what is juſt and proper for us to do: but a ſovereign God, in conferring *unmerited favours*, claims an indiſputable right of doing what he will with his own; yet always exerciſes it in perfect equity, faithfulneſs, and wiſdom, and conſiſtently with his largeſt invitations and promiſes.

V. 19. *Younger brother*, &c.] We ſhall ſee an abundant accompliſhment of this prediction in the following hiſtory.

V. 22. *I took out of*, &c.] Jacob firſt bought this ground of Hamor: but probably after the ſlaughter of the Shechemites, the Amorites ſeized upon it; and afterwards he recovered it by force of arms, in a way, and at a time, of which we are not informed. And though it appears not that he, or his ſons, at this time, or for long after, had any advantage from it; yet in faith he bequeathed it to Joſeph as an acceſſion to the allotted portion, which would be aſſigned to his poſterity, when they ſhould be put in poſſeſſion of Canaan. Here Joſeph's bones were at length depoſited. (xxxiii. 19, *Joſh.* xxiv. 32.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The death-beds of eminent believers frequently afford moſt inſtructive leſſons to thoſe around them. This is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart; and ſuch ſcenes, together with the prayers and counſels of dying perſons, are ſo ſuited to make ſerious impreſſions on the young, the gay, and the proſperous, that we ſhall do well to take our children with us on theſe occaſions, when it can be done with propriety.—It is very deſirable, if the Lord pleaſe, to bear our dying teſtimony to the truths of God, to his faithfulneſs, and to the pleaſantneſs of his ways.—One would wiſh to be ſtrengthened at ſuch a ſolemn ſeaſon to render our laſt ſervice to our ſurvivors; and ſhould have an eye to this, in our whole conduct, that we may ſo live, as may give energy and weight to our dying exhortations: yet at laſt the Spirit diſpenſeth in this matter ſeverally, as he will. Abraham and Iſaac died in faith and in peace, yet we have no record of their dying teſtimony; but Jacob here ſpeaks with great copiouſneſs and energy. All true believers are bleſſed at their death; but all do not depart equally full of ſpiritual conſolation, nor are all alike edifying to the ſpectators.

The joint inheritance of the promiſed bleſſing with the true Iſrael of God, let who will deſpiſe it, is infinitely preferable to the ſole inheritance of all the kingdoms of the world: and the beſt expreſſion of particular affection

CHAP. XLIX.

Contains, 1st. Jacob calling his ſons together to hear his prophetical benediction, v. 1, 2. 2d. A particular addreſs to, and prediction reſpecting, each of them, v. 3—28. 3d, The charge which Jacob gave about his burial, v. 29—32. 4th. His death, v. 33.

AND Jacob called unto his ſons, and ſaid, Gather yourſelves together, that I may tell you *that* which ſhall befal you in the laſt days.

2 Gather yourſelves together, and hear, ye ſons of Jacob; and hearken unto Iſrael your father.

3 Reuben, thou *art* my firſt-born, my might, and the beginning of my ſtrength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

4 Unſtable as water, thou ſhalt not excel, becauſe thou wenteſt up to thy father's bed: then defiledſt thou *it*; he went up to my couch.

5 Simeon

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for our children and relatives conſiſts in recommending our God and religion to them; and in ſeeking for them the grace of God in earneſt prayers, that they may be his adopted children and heirs, according to the promiſe. And though we cannot bleſs them in Jacob's Spirit of prophecy; yet we may with his ſpirit of faith, and humbly hope that our prayers for them will be anſwered, and our exhortations followed, even after we are dead. Nor is there any thing more comfortable to the dying believer himſelf, or more edifying or affecting to thoſe around him, than to reflect upon, and ſpeak of the promiſes of God, and his experience of their faithful accompliſhment, in his providence, and by his grace; to be mindful of his Bethels, and Peniels, and to acknowledge that, notwithſtanding trials and troubles, all hath been done wiſely and graciouſly. In this view, even temporal mercies and deliverances, yea, our daily bread, when conſidered as the gifts of the great Angel of the covenant, the purchaſe of his redemption, and earneſts of better things reſerved for us, become moſt precious bleſſings. And when a dying man can conſider himſelf with confidence redeemed from *all* evil, as pardoned and ſanctified; as ready to have done with conflict, labour, ſin, temptation, darkneſs, ſorrow, and danger of any more offending or diſhonouring God; and as having good, and nothing but good before him to all eternity: with what comfort may he walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death! and though fleſh and heart fail, though the eyes grow dim, and nature ſink in decay, how may he triumph in that God, who is the ſtrength of his heart and his portion for ever! Having experienced, that God hath been better to him, not only than his deſponding fears, but even than his moſt ſanguine hopes, he may chearfully deſcend into the grave, leaning on the tried faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes. But would we thus die the death of the righteous, we muſt walk *before God* in the land of the living; and in the exerciſe and obedience of faith, bear the name, and tread in the ſteps of theſe ancient believers: then though our comforts are dying all around us, God will be with us, countervail all loſſes, and fulfil his largeſt promiſes. Whatever we think whilſt we live, we ſhall at death know that to be fed all our life long, is all that the World can do for us. Little indeed can thoſe poſſeſſions profit us, about which there is ſo much contention, and ſo many cares: though it may be proper to adjuſt with exactneſs every thing reſpecting them, leſt we bequeath diſcord to our poſterity; yet a burying place is all that the ampleſt patrimony will ſhortly afford.—How poor then are they, who have no other riches! and how miſerable a death-bed to thoſe, who have no well-grounded hope of good, but dreadful apprehenſions of evil, and nothing but evil for ever! Let us then fear being put off with a portion in this world; or with an hypocritical religion, and a preſumptuous hope, which will at laſt leave us in deſpair: rather, whatever we loſe, or go without, let us chooſe that good part, which ſhall never be taken from us; and then poverty, pain, reproach, and death itſelf, will be ſo many favourable gales to waft us to the haven of eternal bliſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIX.] V. 1, 2.] All Jacob's ſons were ſtill living; and now at his command they collected themſelves together round his bed, perhaps with their children, to hear his dying words. The ſubſequent repetition of this call might intimate his deſire, that they ſhould keep together, and live in harmony as one family, without intermingling with the Egyptians.—We ought not to conſider this addreſs as the expreſſion of his private affection, or reſentment, or partiality: but as the language of the Holy Ghoſt, declaring the purpoſes of God, reſpecting the character, circumſtances, and ſituation of the ſeveral tribes, deſcended from them, in the laſt times, or in after ages: for the prophecy evidently looks forward beyond the coming of Chriſt; and perhaps ſome of it may be yet unaccompliſhed. We may here obſerve that in this, and ſome other paſſages, ſuch as Noah's prophecy, (ix,) and Moſes bleſſing the tribes, (*Deut.* xxxiii,) there is ſo large an extent of prediction compriſed in few words, that brevity will not allow us to adduce, in a publication of this nature, all that might properly be ſaid by way of elucidating them, and we muſt be content with a compendious abſtract. We ſhould alſo note, that we have only the Scripture hiſtory, (which mentions very little of ſeveral of the tribes,) to proceed upon in many caſes, if we attempt to illuſtrate the prophecy by it's accompliſhment. Had we a more particular account of the diſtinguiſhing character, ſituation, and ſucceſs of each tribe; we ſhould probably

5 Simeon and Levi *are* brethren: inſtruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations.

6 O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecret; unto their aſſembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they ſlew a man, and in their ſelf-will they digged down a wall.

7 Curſed be their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and ſcatter them in Iſrael.

8 Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe; thy hand *ſhall be* in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children ſhall bow down before thee.

9 Judah

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probably perceive a more ſtriking exactneſs in all, than we now diſcern in any of them; and might ſee very clearly, that the whole was foreknown by divine preſcience, and fulfilled by omnipotence. But as matters now are, full ſatisfaction muſt not be expected by the reader; nor more than a few of the moſt intereſting of thoſe obſervations, which have been copiouſly made upon it.

V. 3, 4.] Jacob began with Reuben, who being the eldeſt ſon might have expected the precedency; and that the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of authority would have devolved upon him: but he had incurred a forfeiture; and therefore his father, as it were, arrayed him with the *inſignia* of royalty, that he might more ſolemnly and judicially degrade him.—His inſtability may refer either to his own character, or that of his tribe, or both: like water they were at no ſtay, apt to break through the appointed bounds, and not at all to be depended on.—Accordingly the tribe of Reuben had neither the pre-eminence in one reſpect or another: there is not mentioned in Scripture either king, judge, prophet, or renowned perſon of this tribe; except Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their rebellion againſt Moſes, and againſt God.—Reuben's inceſt had been committed forty years before, and probably was repented of, and pardoned as to it's eternal puniſhment: yet being a crime of ſo infamous a nature, it is here remembered, and his tribe degraded on that account. This was intended to teſtify not only Jacob's, but God's abhorrence of ſuch abominable practices, for a warning to the Iſraelites, and to others in all future ages. Thus children actually do ſuffer for their parents' crimes in this world, but for wiſe, equitable, and merciful reaſons; namely, to warn them not to imitate their ſins, leſt they both ſuffer themſelves, and entail ſuffering on their beloved offspring.—Jacob addreſſed the former part to Reuben himſelf; but he ſpoke the concluding words "he went up "to my couch," to his other ſons, that they might notice and profit by the warning.

V. 5.] Simeon and Levi were next in ſeniority, but they were degraded alſo, and with ſtill deeper abhorrence of the crime, which they had committed. They were brethren, not only as deſcended from the ſame parents, but as being of the ſame fierce and untractable diſpoſition. The ſwords, thoſe inſtruments of cruelty, with which they maſſacred the Shechemites, remained in their houſes, as monuments of that odious crime.—Jacob had probably been ſuſpected of allowing their treacherous revenge; but he here entered his dying proteſt againſt it.—'No, ſays he, my ſoul would have abhorred ſuch a villainous project; and had I been admitted into their ſecret, I would have immediately divulged it.' His honour was intimately connected with the honour of his religion, and the glory of the God whom he worſhipped: therefore, ſays he, 'let 'it never be imputed to me, that I was one of this ſcandalous 'confederacy: it would not only be a diſgrace to my cha-'racter; but it would diſcredit the worſhip of Jehovah in 'future ages, and in diſtant nations, were it ſaid that Iſrael, 'who had power with God and prevailed, was guilty of 'ſuch a crime. Let then Simeon and Levi, though my 'own ſons, bear the blame, and let the degraded ſtate of 'their tribes ſtill proclaim my abhorrence, yea my God's 'abhorrence of their wickedneſs.'—For in their rage againſt Shechem, they ſlew him; but they ſcorned to lay hands on him alone, and therefore ſlew numbers with him. —Yea, they were too ſelf-willed and headſtrong in their own way, either to aſk, or take any wholeſome counſel:—So that they ſtopped not, till they had deſolated and plundered the city. Jacob therefore execrated and called on all men to deteſt, their fierce anger and cruel wrath: yet he did not curſe *them*; nay he is ſaid to have bleſſed all his ſons, and we may hope they were bleſſed. But he pronounced a prophetic ſentence upon them in God's name, that they ſhould be divided from each other, and one part of their deſcendants from another, in Jacob and Iſrael. Though degraded from the pre-eminence, they ſhould ſhare in the promiſed land, in the ordinances of God, and in the benefits of the covenant made with their fathers. Accordingly the tribe of Simeon had only a portion within the lot of Judah which was too large for him; (*Joſhua* xix. 1—9:) where being ſtraitened, part of them went in queſt of new ſettlements, (1 *Chron.* iv. 24—39,) and were thus divided in Jacob. Tradition alſo reports, that numbers of this tribe were diſperſed amongſt the other tribes, as inſtructors of children for their ſupport.—The ſentence in Levi's caſe was not reverſed, but converted into a bleſſing; and being ſeparated, and conſecrated to God, as the prieſtly tribe, it became honourably and profitably diſperſed in that character through Iſrael.

V. 8—12.] The bleſſing of Judah begins with an elegant alluſion to his name, which ſignifies *praiſe*:—He too had been guilty of ſome miſdemeanors, though not of ſo flagrant a nature: Yet had Jacob been influenced by his own ſpirit, he would probably have paſſed him by alſo, that the birthright and bleſſing might have been given to his

9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp; from the prey, my ſon, thou art gone up: he ſtooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who ſhall rouſe him up?

10 The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him *ſhall* the gathering of the people *be*.

11 Binding his fole unto the vine, and his aſs's colt unto the choice vine; he waſhed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes *ſhall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

13 Zebulun ſhall dwell at the haven of the

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his beloved Joſeph, the ſon of his beloved Rachel.—But indeed the Spirit of God alone could communicate ſuch knowledge of future, and diſtant events, as is evidently contained in this chapter.—Under this holy influence, he predicted, that "Judah's hand ſhould be in the neck of "his enemies," to ſubject, triumph over, and deſtroy them: and that "his father's children ſhould bow down before "him," by willingly ſubmitting to his authority.—Accordingly this tribe took the lead by God's appointment in their encampments in the wilderneſs, marched firſt againſt the Canaanites, after Joſhua's death, and obtained the firſt ſettlement in Canaan.—David and Solomon of this tribe were ſignally proſperous, both in extending their dominions, and in domeſtic affairs: and their deſcendants until, and even after, the Babyloniſh captivity were in power and authority.—Judah was alſo compared to "a lion's whelp:" the princes of this tribe were very courageous and victorious, yet not cruel and tyrannical.—Indeed they were often diſpoſed to live in peace, but they were always warlike and victorious when rouſed to arms.—The word rendered *ſceptre* in the ſubſequent remarkable prophecy, is ſometimes tranſlated *Tribe*, and ſometimes *rod*, or *ſtaff*: ſo that it may mean either the ſceptre of kingly government over all Iſrael, or their diſtinct ſubſiſtence, and internal government as a tribe, or both.—The tribe of Judah had in many things the pre-eminence before the times of David: in his days and in Solomon's, it had the whole kingly authority: after the revolt of the other tribes, Benjamin adhered to it, with the Levites, and numbers flocked to it from all the other tribes; the kingdom in the line of David was called the kingdom of Judah, and continued to the captivity:—After that event, all who remained of the other tribes, were incorporated with them, and were called Jews, or Judeans. The government continued with them, and with thoſe who united with them, till they were conquered by other nations: yet, even in Babylon, they appear to have had an internal government: afterwards, even under the Roman power, and notwithſtanding the kings, tetrarchs, and governors, which were placed over them, much authority was veſted in the ſanhedrim, who were chiefly of this tribe, until the coming of Chriſt; as it is evident from the concurrent teſtimony of Jewiſh and Chriſtian hiſtorians. The tribe of Judah alſo was preſerved more diſtinct than any of the reſt, and at our Lord's coming it's genealogies could be traced back to Judah.—It was alſo predicted, that a lawgiver, or a governor and judge, as the word is often uſed, deſcended from Judah, ſhould exerciſe authority, and execute judgment, in one form or other, amongſt them, till Shiloh came.—*Shiloh* is by ſome rendered, *he who is ſent*, by others *the peaceable one*, and by others *the Seed:* but all muſt interpret it of the Meſſiah, who was ſent into the world, as the promiſed Seed, and as the Prince of Peace. It has been ſhewn that the ſceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet; but that authority was in one way or other veſted in this tribe, until the time of Chriſt.—But ſoon after Jeruſalem was deſolated, the whole civil and eccleſiaſtical ſtate was overturned, the people were ſcattered over the earth, all their diſtinctions were confounded; and they have remained to this day, (upwards of 1700 years) more entirely deſtitute of ſceptre, lawgiver, or ſhadow of authority, than ever they were even in the Babyloniſh captivity: therefore Shiloh is come, and Jeſus Chriſt is he.—It was added, "Unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be." If we underſtand this of Judah, it had it's accompliſhment in ſeveral of the events before mentioned; and alſo in the gathering of the people to Mount Zion, which was in this tribe, to keep their ſolemn feaſts; to the court of David and his deſcendants; and alſo in Benjamin's uniting intereſts with Judah, in the Levites adhering to him; and in the people flocking to him from the other tribes, in the days of Jereboam. And to Shiloh the gathering of the people, both Jews and Gentiles, hath been, is, and will be more and more, until the earth ſhall be full of his glory; yea until all the world ſhall be gathered before his judgment ſeat; and the redeemed from all the kindreds and nations of the earth, ſhall be gathered with him into heaven.—The precedency, and the honour of giving birth to the Meſſiah muſt be appropriated to one tribe; but a lot in the land of Canaan, and many temporal, and ſpiritual bleſſings might be enjoyed in common by many.—What follows, therefore, in reſpect of Judah, ſeems to relate primarily to theſe bleſſings, and to foretel that Judah's lot in Canaan ſhould abound in vines, ſo ſtrong, that they ſhould tie their young aſſes to them, and ſo fruitful that they ſhould load them from them: and that they ſhould be ſo much employed about them, as to have their garments ſtained with their juice.—They ſhould have plenty of wine for their exhilaration, which would ſometimes be abuſed in intemperance, ſo that their eyes would be red with wine, and their teeth white with milk, with which alſo their lot ſhould abound. We have ſeen much of this prophecy applied

the sea: and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

14 Issachar *is* a strong ass, couching down between two burdens.

15 And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

20 Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21 Naphtali *is* a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

22 Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful

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applied to Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, terrible to his obstinate foes, but merciful to those who submit—

'*Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos,*'

and kind to his meanest servant. When he came, he took the sceptre from Judah's hand; and all their kings, and rulers had been but types of him, to whom the gathering of the people is. No wonder therefore the Jews are now bereft of it.—And we may also observe that he is the true vine; that wine is the appointed symbol of his blood, which is drink indeed, as shed for sinners and applied in faith; and that all the blessings of his Gospel are wine and milk without money, and without price, to which every thirsty soul is welcome.

V. 13. *Zebulun shall dwell*, &c.] According to this prediction, the tribe of Zebulun had a portion assigned to it, *by lot*, which reached nearly, if not entirely, from the Mediterranean sea to the sea of Galilee. (*Josh.* xix. 10—16. *Deut.* xxxiii. 18.)

V. 14, 15.] Issachar is here emblematically described according to his future character, as industrious and unambitious, and bearing labour or tribute peaceably, of which burdens others grievously complain. He was sensible that rest, not from labour, but from war and contention, was profitable; and being satisfied with the pleasantness of a remote part of the country, he little intermeddled with the affairs of the state, or of war. Accordingly this tribe is seldom mentioned in the subsequent history.

V. 16, 17.] Dan signifies *judgment:* and Jacob foretels, that though he was the son of one of his concubines, being the first of them whom he mentions, he should be the head of a separate tribe, and have a share in the management of affairs, as if he had been descended from Leah or Rachel. —What follows is a sketch of the character of the Danites, as subtle and mischievous, like serpents and adders; and of their success in these practices, which would probably appear to us with striking propriety, had we their history as a tribe: as indeed it might to their contemporaries.—Sampson was of this tribe, who unexpectedly buried the Philistines in the ruins of the temple of Dagon, as the adder causes the horse to throw his rider.

V. 18. *I have waited for*, &c.] Jacob, as exhausted with speaking to his sons, here pauses, and speaks unto the Lord, by way of refreshing his spirits in the recollection of the near approach of that salvation, for which he had so long waited. Mr. Henry here observes, "That the "pious ejaculations of lively devotion may sometimes "appear incoherent, but ought never to be censured as "impertinent."

V. 19. *Gad, a troop*, &c.] Gad signifies *a troop*; and the character, and situation of this tribe are both here described. The Gadites were renowned for valour: (1 *Chron.* xii. 8;) and having their inheritance beyond Jordan eastward, they lay open to incursions from troops of Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, and others; by whom doubtless they were frequently annoyed: but they still maintained their ground, and under David and his posterity subjugated their enemies. This blessing aptly describes a Christian's conflict: he is overcome in many combats, but is more than conqueror in the final event of the war.

V. 20. *Out of Asher*, &c.] *Asher* signifies *the blessed*; and Jacob by the Spirit of prophecy allots him a plentiful country, yielding abundance for himself and others; even royal dainties, to supply the tables of princes at home and abroad.

V. 21. *Naphtali is a hind*, &c.] None of these concise prophecies is more obscure, or hath given learned men more trouble, and afforded them less satisfaction, than this verse.—But without entering into these difficulties, we may take it as it stands in our translation, and consider it as a sketch of the character of this tribe: as unlike the laborious ox and ass; affecting ease and liberty; insinuating and affectionate; active but volatile; more noted for quick dispatch, than steady labour and perseverance; and more disposed to exult in national blessings, than to fight in defence of them; like the hind which flees from, not like the lion who faces and overcomes his enemy; like the suppliant who with goodly words craves mercy, not like the warrior, who disdains to ask or even accept of quarter. Barak and many of his soldiers were of this tribe, and though they fought successfully at last, at first they were very timorous. I recollect no other warriors of this tribe.

V. 22—26.] A great part of what Jacob says concerning his beloved Joseph is historical, and relates to his past life; yet much also is prophetical.—He is here called

ful bough by a well; *whoſe* branches run over the wall.

23 The archers have ſorely grieved him, and ſhot *at him*, and hated him.

24 But his bow abode in ſtrength, and the arms of his hands were made ſtrong, by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob: from thence *is* the ſhepherd, the ſtone of Iſrael.

25 *Even* by the God of thy father, who ſhall help thee, and by the Almighty, who ſhall bleſs thee with bleſſings of heaven above, bleſſings of the deep that lieth under, bleſſings of the breaſts and of the womb.

26 The bleſſings of thy father have prevailed above the bleſſings of my progenitors, unto the utmoſt bound of the everlaſting hills; they ſhall be on the head of Joſeph, and on the crown of the head of him that was ſeparate from his brethren.

27 Benjamin ſhall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he ſhall devour the prey, and at night he ſhall divide the ſpoil.

28 All

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a fruitful bough, or young tree planted by the water ſide: he had no more than two ſons, but from them ſprang two tribes, which ſeem to have become very numerous; eſpecially Ephraim, which was ſo eminent in Iſrael, that the whole kingdom is frequently denominated from it.—Joſeph's brethren had hated and perſecuted him; Potiphar's wife tempted, and then ſlandered him; Potiphar condemned and impriſoned him; and it is a ſingular caſe indeed, if ſome of the Egyptians did not revile and envy him, though we read not of it. Thus the Archers ſorely grieved, though they did not eventually hurt, him. It may likewiſe look forward to the terrible wars, which his deſcendants waged, eſpecially with the kingdom of Judah. His weapons, however, in this warfare failed him not, as a broken or weakened bow would have done: and his hands and arms were ſtrengthened to uſe them, by the mighty power of God. That is, the providence of God outwardly protected and proſpered him; and the Spirit of God endued him inwardly with ſuch ſtrength of faith and grace, as produced invincible courage, reſolution, and perſeverance: thus he was enabled to ſtand his ground, and to repel every attack of his enemies. His life was preſerved, his reputation was cleared, his integrity remained unimpeached; and riſing ſuperior to all oppoſition his brethren ſued to him, and became dependent on him, and all his enemies bowed before him, and ſought his favour. By means of this divine aſſiſtance and bleſſing, and through all theſe trials and troubles, he at length became the ſhepherd of Iſrael, to ſuſtain his father and family, and to take care of them: and the ſtone of Iſrael, the foundation and ſtrong ſupport of their intereſts. In theſe reſpects, as in many other things, he was a remarkable type of the good Shepherd, and tried corner Stone of the whole church of God.—And indeed, though the kingdom, and the honour of being the progenitor of Chriſt, were intended for Judah: yet Joſeph was the eſpecial type of the Saviour among Jacob's ſons; and all, here ſpoken of him, ought to be conſidered as deſcriptive of the great Antitype. He too was greatly grieved, ſhot at, and hated; but his bow abode in ſtrength, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt he fails not, nor is diſcouraged, until his enemies are put under his footſtool; and his brethren are brought to be with him where he is, to behold and ſhare his glory. Thus Joſeph being helped by the God of his father Jacob, was perſonally, and in his poſterity, triumphant over all his enemies. Joſhua, who commanded, and was ſo ſignally victorious, in the wars of Canaan, was one of Joſeph's deſcendants.—Moreover it was predicted, that God would bleſs his poſterity with a temperate climate, a fruitful ſoil, the treaſures that are dug from the bowels of the earth,—a numerous and healthful progeny; and extenſive and durable bleſſings of every kind, even like the mountains, which ſhall endure as long as the earth itſelf; which things are typical of the vaſt and everlaſting bleſſings, that are conferred upon the ſpiritual ſeed of Chriſt. Indeed Jacob bleſſed *all his ſons*, more particularly, copiouſly, and clearly, than Abraham and Iſaac had done: the promiſes alſo drew near their accompliſhment, and his ſeed were multiplying very faſt: but eſpecially Joſeph, who was not only ſeparated from his brethren who ſold him into Egypt, but was, as it may be rendered, a *Nazarite from among his brethren*, more devoted unto God, and more excellent than they. The expreſſion, on the *crown of the head*, may refer to the Nazarite's vow, which ſeems to have ſubſiſted before the giving of the law, and only to have been regulated by it. (*Num.* vi.) In this alſo, he was a type of him, who was holy, ſeparate from ſinners, and called a Nazarene.

V. 27. *Benjamin*, &c.] According to the emblem here uſed, the character of this tribe was fierceneſs and cruelty; which eſpecially appears in the hiſtory of the Levite's concubine: (*Judges* xix. xx.) when after the wickedneſs was committed, the Benjamites ſingly withſtood all the other tribes, and had the advantage in two battles, nor ceaſed till they were almoſt entirely deſtroyed. Ehud the ſecond Judge, and Saul the firſt king were of this tribe. In the former part of the hiſtory we read frequently of the Benjamites as a warlike people. And in the latter times they joined themſelves to the tribe of Judah, and thus divided the ſpoil, and ſhared with them in their privileges.—Paul was of this tribe, who, as it were in the morning of his life, ravined as a wolf, and devoured the prey in perſecuting the Chriſtians: but in the evening of his days, as a preacher of the Goſpel, he ſhared the bleſſings with Judah's Lion, aſſiſted in his victories, and thus divided the ſpoil.

V. 28. *Every one*, &c.] That is according to the bleſſing, which God intended in after times to beſtow upon them. Though ſome of Jacob's ſons were reproved and diſgraced

28 All theſe *are* the twelve tribes of Iſrael: and this *is it* that their father ſpake unto them, and bleſſed them; every one according to his bleſſing he bleſſed them.

29 And he charged them, and ſaid unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

30 In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a poſſeſſion of a burying-place.

31 (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Iſaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah).

32 The purchaſe of the field and of the cave that *is* therein, *was* from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his ſons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghoſt, and was gathered unto his people.

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diſgraced, yet none of them were excluded (as Iſhmael and Eſau had been,) from the promiſed land, and the peculiar privileges of Abraham's ſeed; and when we compare their ſituation with the Gentile nations, we ſhall eaſily ſee that they were all indeed bleſſed with moſt invaluable bleſſings.

V. 29. *And he charged them*, &c.] As he had done Joſeph before. One deſign of Jacob ſeems to have been to draw off the thoughts of his ſons from Egypt, to weaken their attachment to that country, and to lead them to fix their hearts upon Canaan.

V. 31. *I buried Leah.*] By burying Leah, and wiſhing to be buried himſelf, not where his beloved Rachael lay, but where Abraham and Iſaac lay, Jacob expreſſed his faith in the God of Abraham and Iſaac, and his deſire of having his portion with them beyond the grave.

V. 32. *He gathered*, &c.] Thus Jacob, having been enabled to finiſh all, for which he wiſhed to live, laid down and died with the utmoſt ſerenity and compoſure.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit can make men forget pain, raiſe them above the feeling of an exhauſted frame, and enable them to ſpeak on a death-bed with pleaſure to themſelves and profit to others. But views into futurity, except as they reſpect the future felicity of Heaven, would afford us little ſatisfaction. Had not Jacob looked forward to the coming of Shiloh, and waited for his ſalvation, he could but little have rejoiced in his prophetical benediction of his family, when the whole is conſidered: ſo vain is the beſt eſtate of earthly bliſs!—Whatever therefore tends to draw off our affections from things below, and raiſe them to things above; whatever tends to cement our union with the people of God, and to diſunite us from the world, muſt be good for us: ſuch in general is the tendency of the admonitions, and even rebukes, of pious parents, eſpecially at the cloſe of their life, and when mixed with prayers for their childrens' welfare.

Sins long ſince committed, if not waſhed away in the blood of Chriſt, will at laſt riſe up againſt us to our condemnation: and even when repented of, and pardoned, they may oft be remembered againſt us to our confuſion. We may both in the correction of a merciful father, the rebukes of kind friends, and the upbraidings of unkind enemies, be made to bear the reproach, and to poſſeſs the iniquities of our youth, in our circumſtances, conſtitutions, and reputations. We ſhould therefore remember them for our humiliation, and that we may bear ſuch rebukes with patience and meekneſs: for if our violations of God's law do not exclude us from Heaven, we have great cauſe for thankfulneſs; and if we are truly penitent, our very ſufferings ſhall be converted into bleſſings to ourſelves and others.

Thoſe, who are of eminence in the profeſſion of religion, ſhould be peculiarly ſtedfaſt in proteſting againſt the wickedneſs of other profeſſors: and in wiping away every ſuſpicion of conniving at their ſins, though it ſhould leave infamy upon their neareſt relations. *They* had better bear the reproach, than that it ſhould reſt upon the Goſpel.

Revenge or ſenſual pleaſure may be ſweet at the time, but they will leave a laſting ſting behind them. Such men, as are unſtable in their ways, will never be eminent, either in the world or in the church: and they, who are ſelf-willed, will make themſelves and others miſerable. But though ſome are to be blamed, we muſt not condemn families or people indiſcriminately, nor magnify every offence into a crime of deep malignity: notwithſtanding defects, ſome merit our commendation; and though men are not all of the ſame diſpoſition, nor alike proſperous, God diſpenſing to them variouſly as he pleaſes; yet he bleſſes all with many unmerited mercies, and eſpecially thoſe who live under the ordinances of God, and enjoy the means of grace.—But chiefly praiſe is due to him, who ſprang out of Judah, in whom the moſt oppoſite excellencies harmonize.—As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he will terribly avenge upon his enemies his ſlighted love: as the Lamb of God, by his ſacrifice he taketh away the ſin of the world. His ſceptre of grace he ſtretches forth from the mercy ſeat, and invites us periſhing ſinners to draw near, and accept of his Salvation, that we may not feel the ſtroke of his iron rod: and if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, bleſſed are all they who truſt in him. Aſſuredly this Meſſenger of Peace is come, and unbelieving Jews without ſceptre or governor are his unwilling witneſſes.—But may they, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles be gathered unto him, and with us enjoy bleſſings incomparably better than the richeſt fruit of the vine and the corn field, and all royal dainties;

than

CHAP. L.

Contains 1ſt. The mourning for, and embalming of, Jacob, v. 1—3. 2d. Joſeph's requeſt for leave to go and bury his father, granted by Pharaoh, v. 4—6. 3d. The burial of Jacob in Machpelah, v. 7—13. 4th. The ſuſpicious fears of the ſons of Jacob, and Joſeph's kindneſs to them, v. 14—22. 5th. Joſeph's prophecy and charge concerning his bones; his age, and death, v. 24—26.

AND Joſeph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kiſſed him.

2 And Joſeph commanded his ſervants the phyſicians to embalm his father: and the phyſicians embalmed Iſrael.

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him, (for ſo are fulfilled the days of thoſe which are embalmed;) and the Egyptians mourned for him threeſcore and ten days.

4 And when the days of his mourning were paſt, Joſeph ſpake unto the houſe of Pharaoh, ſaying, if now I have found grace in your eyes, ſpeak I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, ſaying,

5 My father made me ſwear, ſaying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me, in the land of Canaan, there ſhalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh ſaid, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee ſwear.

7 And Joſeph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the ſervants of Pharaoh, the elders of his houſe, and all the elders of the land of Egypt.

8 And all the houſe of Joſeph and his brethren; and his father's houſe: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goſhen.

9 And there went up with him both chariots and horſemen: and it was a very great company.

10 And they came to the threſhing-floor of Atad, which *is* beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very ſore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father ſeven days.

11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, ſaw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they ſaid, This *is* a grievous mourning to the Egyptians; wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which *is* beyond Jordan.

12 And

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than treaſures dug from mines, gained by commerce, or ſeized by conqueſt; bleſſings more firmly ſecured, than the foundations of the hills, and more durable than creation itſelf; even everlaſting felicity. With the earneſts of this happineſs comforting our hearts, his yoke will be eaſy, and his burden light; nor will the hardeſt ſervice, or the heavieſt tribute which he impoſes, prevent our finding reſt for our ſouls: his grace will be ſufficient for us; ſo that we ſhall conquer our moſt powerful, and ſupplant our moſt ſubtle foes. We may indeed be grieved with, and ſhall be ſhot at by, the arrows of temptation, and ſlander; but no weapon formed againſt us ſhall proſper, and every tongue that ariſeth againſt us in judgment, we ſhall condemn; becauſe Jacob's God will be on our ſide.—Under the care of the Shepherd of Iſrael, we ſhall lack nothing for body or ſoul: built upon the Rock of ſalvation, we ſhall abide immoveable, until our work be finiſhed: then breathing out our ſouls into his hands, for whoſe ſalvation we have waited, we ſhall depart in peace, and leave a bleſſing on our children after us.

NOTES.

CHAP. L.] V. 2. *The phyſicians embalmed*, &c.] The Egyptians were eminent for this art of preſerving dead bodies from putrefaction, by a certain proceſs in the uſe of ſpices and drugs. Several of theſe bodies remain to this day, and are called Egyptian Mummies, being preſerved as great curioſities; and ſome of them have probably continued in this ſtate much above 2000 years. The cuſtom not being ſinful, was on this occaſion attended to, and might have ſome expediency, as Jacob was to be carried into Canaan.

V. 4. *Joſeph ſpake*, &c.] Perhaps it was not allowed to come into the preſence of the King in mourning; (*Eſther*, iv. 1, 2;) or Joſeph would thus make his requeſt with all the modeſty, and decorum poſſible; and ſending his meſſage by others, would at once ſhow his reſpect to Pharaoh, and to them.

V. 5. *My father made me ſwear*, &c.] Joſeph would not appear weary of his cloſe application to buſineſs, or negligent of the intereſts of Egypt, and of Pharaoh, in thus craving leave of abſence: therefore he was careful to repreſent the matter, not as any inclination of his own, but as the dying requeſt of his father, who was ſo earneſt in it, as to bring him under the ſolemn obligation of an oath.

V. 10. *Beyond Jordan.*] Moſes wrote, or reviſed, his hiſtory

12 And his ſons did unto him according as he commanded them.

13 For his ſons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah; which Abraham bought with the field for a poſſeſſion of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

14 And Joſeph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15 And when Joſeph's brethren ſaw that their father was dead, they ſaid, Joſeph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they ſent meſſengers unto Joſeph, ſaying, Thy father did command before he died, ſaying,

17 So ſhall ye ſay unto Joſeph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the treſpaſs of thy brethren, and their ſin; for they did unto thee evil: and now we pray thee forgive the treſpaſs of the ſervants of the God of thy father. And Joſeph wept when they ſpake unto him.

18 And his brethen alſo wept and fell down before his face: and they ſaid, Behold, we *be* thy ſervants.

19 And Joſeph ſaid unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as *it is* this day, to ſave much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nouriſh you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and ſpake kindly unto them.

22 And Joſeph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's houſe: and Joſeph lived an hundred and ten years.

23 And Joſeph ſaw Ephraim's children, of the third *generation:* the children alſo of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, were brought up upon Joſeph's knees.

24 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, I die: and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he ſware to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob.

25 And

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hiſtory on the eaſt-ſide of Jordan; therefore in his five books *beyond Jordan* means *weſt-ward:* In other parts of ſcripture it generally means *eaſt-ward.*—During ſeven days they performed ſolemn funeral obſequies.

V. 11. *Egyptians*, &c.] The inhabitants of Canaan naturally called *them all* Egyptians, as coming out of Egypt; though ſome of them muſt know to whom this ſepulchre belonged.

V. 14. *Returned*, &c.] Various motives might induce the ſons of Jacob to continue in Egypt, notwithſtanding the prophetic viſion, which Abraham had of their bondage there. Some might diſregard it, if it was known and remembered by them; others might ſubmit to it, and not deem themſelves allowed to move without command from God; whilſt fear, intereſt, eaſe, and the plenty which they enjoyed, would concur in detaining them, and effecting the purpoſe of God.

V. 15. *Joſeph will—hate*, &c.] Joſeph's brethren ſuppoſed that tenderneſs to Jacob had hitherto reſtrained him from executing the puniſhment, which they were conſcious they merited: and judging of him from the general temper of human nature, they apprehended, that he would now avenge himſelf on them, ſeeing they had hated and injured him without cauſe. Therefore not being able to reſiſt, or to flee away, they attempted to ſoften him by humiliations.

V. 16—18.] They ſaid not, "our father," but more pathetically, "thy father." Probably Jacob had given them ſome injunction to this purpoſe, which they firſt reported as introductory to their own ſupplication; and then pleaded with Joſeph for pardon in the character of the ſervants of Jacob's God. This ſhews with what care and prudence they had concerted this buſineſs: and we need not wonder that Joſeph was much affected at witneſſing this moſt exact accompliſhment of his dreams.

V. 19. *Am I in the place of God?*] It belongs to God to execute vengeance, and Joſeph meant not to uſurp his prerogative. Thus he directed them not to fear him, but to fear God, to humble themſelves before him, and ſeek his forgiveneſs.

V. 20. *Ye thought evil, but*, &c.] Joſeph's brethren in ſelling him acted with extreme malice and wickedneſs, and meant that he ſhould live and die a deſtitute ſlave: but God in permitting it meant *good* to Joſeph, to Jacob, to his brethren, to their families, to Egypt, to Canaan, and to the neighbouring nations; nor can we number up all the important purpoſes anſwered by it to the Church and to the World; or calculate how many important events depended on it, through all ſucceeding generations. The ſame is obſervable in many other inſtances in Scripture; and we cannot poſſibly account for the diſpenſations of providence without admitting, that God leaves evil men and evil ſpirits to themſelves to commit wickedneſs, as far as he intends to educe good from it, but no further. They are influenced wholly by a deſire of gratifying their own vile affections, and are, therefore, juſtly condemned: He, in omniſcience and infinite wiſdom, purpoſing moſt extenſive and durable

25 And Joſeph took an oath of the children of Iſrael, ſaying, God will ſurely viſit you, and ye ſhall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joſeph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

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good, is worthy of all adoration, and praiſe on that account.

V. 22. *An hundred and ten years.*] Joſeph ſurvived Jacob 53 or 54 years, and probably continued in authority to the laſt.

V. 23. *Upon Joſeph's knees.*] Expreſſing his affection for them, and pleaſure in them.

V. 25. *Carry up*, &c.] Joſeph did this in faith, (*Heb.* xi. 22:) He fully expected that the promiſe of God would be verified; and deſired to have his lot beyond the grave with the Iſraelites, and not with the Egyptians.

V. 26. *In a coffin*, &c.] This circumſtance would keep alive the expectation of a ſpeedy departure from Egypt, and preſerve Canaan continually in their mind. It would alſo attach Joſeph's poſterity to their brethren, and tend to prevent them from incorporating with the Egyptians.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though our pious friends have lived to a good old age, and we are confident they are gone to glory; yet we may well regret our own loſs, and pay reſpect to their memory by lamenting for them: nor does grace deſtroy, but purify, moderate, and regulate, natural affection. Others beſides relatives have cauſe to mourn the death of eminent believers: for as their prayers, example, and influence were a public benefit, ſo their death is a public loſs. But alas! generally ſuch mournings are a mere compliment; and men are ſcarcely in earneſt about any thing, but the purſuits of ambition, wealth, or pleaſure. The attention paid to the dead, though commonly the effect of cuſtom or ſuperſtition, ſhould reſult from faith in the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and the reſurrection of the body. Our deceaſed friends ſtill live, and we ſhall meet again: though ſeparated from the body, a re-union ſhall certainly take place. Therefore we commit the body, with decent reſpect, unto the ground, in *ſure* and certain hope of *the* reſurrection to eternal life of all true believers: and whatever our hopes or fears are, God is the only infallible Judge, who are and who are not true believers. We ought ſcrupulouſly to obſerve the laſt will and dying requeſts of our deceaſed friends; but much more conſciouſly to reverence the oath of God. However, in the moſt exact attention to ſuch neceſſary affairs, we ſhould conſult in what manner to do them, that we may give as little umbrage, and interfere with other duties as little, as poſſible. —There are many devices in the heart of man, but the counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand: and whilſt men are often influenced by the worſt of motives; God, by means of them, effects his own moſt righteous purpoſes.—How guilt diſmays the heart in times of danger! it would be well indeed, if it put us upon as diligent and humble endeavours to obtain forgiveneſs from God; as it often does to appeaſe the diſpleaſure of man, and to avert temporal calamities. True religion will teach us, not only to forgive thoſe, who are conſcious of having injured us, and whom we have in our power; but effectually, by kind actions as well as words, to obviate their ſuſpicions, aſſure them of our forgiveneſs, and exhort them to ſeek pardon from him to whom vengeance belongs. But the kindeſt friends, and the moſt durable of our earthly comforts muſt die: let us then look off even from Joſeph that we may look unto Jeſus, who ever liveth to bleſs thoſe, who truſt in him: notwithſtanding former crimes, and preſent unbelieving injurious ſuſpicions, he acknowledges every humble ſinner, who ſupplicates his mercy, as his brother; as ſuch he will comfort his heart, provide for his wants, and receive him to glory. To him let us ſeek, on him rely, and to him ſubmit; and when we come to die, give him charge of both ſoul and body: and we ſhall find him faithful and able to keep that, which is committed to him, until the judgment day.

THE

THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

EXODUS.

As the Book of Geneſis contained the Hiſtory of the Creation of the World; ſo this Book of Exodus relates to the formation of Iſrael into a Church and Nation: And as we have hitherto ſeen true Religion exemplified in domeſtic Life; ſo now we begin to trace it's effects upon the great concerns of Kingdoms and Nations.—The Greek Tranſlators call the Book EXODUS, which ſignifies, the Departure; *Becauſe the grand event recorded in it is the departure of Iſrael from Egypt and Egyptian bondage, which took place about* 145 *years after the death of Joſeph.—A great part of the book is hiſtorical, concerning Iſrael and the Egyptians in general, and Moſes himſelf in particular: but it contains alſo the delivery of the Moral Law from Mount Sinai, and the inſtitution of part of the Ceremonial Law; the covenant made with Iſrael, and the worſhip of God inſtituted amongſt them: And it is eſpecially remarkable for being more replete with Types and Shadows of good things to come, than any other Book in the Scripture.*

Before Chriſt 1635. *Before Chriſt* 1588.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. The names of the ſons of Jacob, with the death of all that generation, and the vaſt increaſe of their poſterity, v. 1—7. *2d. The politic, but vain, attempts of the king of Egypt to check their increaſe, v.* 8—14. *3d. His cruel orders to the midwives, their pious diſobedience, and God's acceptance of it; together with Pharaoh's injunctions to his own ſubjects to deſtroy the male infants, v.* 15—22.

NOW theſe *are* the names of the children of Iſrael, which came into Egypt, every man and his houſhold came with Jacob.

2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.
3 Iſſachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,
4 Dan, and Naphthali, Gad, and Aſher.
5 And all the ſouls that came out of the loins of Jacob, were ſeventy ſouls; for Joſeph was in Egypt *already*.
6 And Joſeph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.
7 And the children of Iſrael were fruitful, and increaſed abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.
8 Now there aroſe up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joſeph.
9 And he ſaid unto his people, Behold, the

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 7. *Were fruitful*, &c.] Theſe expreſſions are taken from the immenſely rapid increaſe of inſects, and of the inhabitants of the waters. It is computed that the numbers of the Iſraelites were doubled every fourteen years, from their going down into Egypt until the Exodus.—Thus their numbers became ſo great, that they were very formidable to the Egyptians.

V. 8. *Which knew not*, &c.] This muſt have been many years after Joſeph's death, perhaps not leſs than 60. Whether this king ſprang from another family, or were a deſcendant of Joſeph's friend; having no perſonal knowledge of him, he had no regard to his memory, eſteem for his excellency, or ſenſe of the benefits Egypt had received from him: and therefore, he preferred his ſuppoſed political

the people of the children of Iſrael *are* more and mightier than we.

10 Come on, let us deal wiſely with them: leſt they multiply, and it come to paſs, that when there falleth out any war, they join alſo unto our enemies and fight againſt us, and *ſo* get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did ſet over them taſk-maſters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treaſure-cities, Pithom and Raamſes.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved becauſe of the children of Iſrael.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Iſrael to ſerve with rigour.

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of ſervice in the field: all their ſervice wherein they made them ſerve, *was* with rigour.

15 And the king of Egypt ſpake to the Hebrew midwives, (of which the name of one one *was* Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:)

16 And he ſaid, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and ſee *them* upon the ſtools; if it *be* a ſon, then ye ſhall kill him, but if it *be* a daughter, then ſhe ſhall live.

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but ſaved the men-children alive.

18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and ſaid unto them, Why have ye done

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political intereſts, to the claims of honour and gratitude, after the too general maxims of kings and rulers.

V. 9. *More*, &c.] Pharaoh took occaſion, from the great increaſe of the Iſraelites compared with that of the Egyptians, to excite ſuſpicions of them, and thus to cover his intentions of enſlaving them.—As if he had ſaid, 'if 'we would deal with them, we muſt begin directly, or 'they will be too powerful.' For when he afterwards expreſſed his apprehenſion, leſt they ſhould "get them up "out of the land," he diſcovered that he feared nothing but the loſs of an opportunity of ſubjugating them, and of enriching himſelf by their labours.—We have ſome intimations that, about this time, the Iſraelites began to comply with the idolatry of the Egyptians, for which they were thus chaſtiſed by them. (*Joſhua* xxiv. 14. *Ezek.* xx. 7, 8. xxiii. 8.)

V. 11. *Taſk-maſters*, &c.] Theſe labours ſeem to have been exacted of the Iſraelites as a tax, but in that degree which reduced them to a ſtate of ſlavery. The taſk-maſters were Egyptians, by public authority placed over them, to enforce theſe iniquitous exactions.—By this policy the Egyptians intended, not only to enrich themſelves, but to break the ſpirits of the Iſraelites, that they might not affect liberty, or aſpire after dominion; and alſo to prevent their *too rapid increaſe*, by embittering their domeſtic life.—The cities which they builded, were either intended, (after the pattern Joſeph had ſet them,) for granaries to lay up corn in ſtore againſt a year of ſcarcity, or they were fortified places.—They were however uſeful works, and as Iſrael's toil ſaved both the labour and the purſes of the Egyptians, we may be ſure they would favour the oppreſſion.

V. 12. *And they were grieved*, &c.] It exceedingly chagrined the Egyptians to find their ſchemes prove abortive, and excited alarms in their minds, leſt in proceſs of time the Iſraelites ſhould reſent and revenge the inhuman treatment they had received. Thus Egypt's perſecution could not prevent Iſrael's increaſe, but Iſrael's increaſe could diſturb Egypt's comfort: Such is the warfare betwixt the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent.

V. 14. *In the field.*] Or *in cultivating their land.*—They treated them with rigour, both in the exceſs of their labours, and the ſeverity of their puniſhments. Many have ſuppoſed, that, beſides the uſeful works here mentioned, the Iſraelites were employed in building thoſe enormous piles called the pyramids; which remain to this day, and probably will continue till the end of the world; monuments, not ſo much of the greatneſs and wiſdom, as of the folly, caprice, exorbitant power, and cruel tyranny of the monarchs who projected them. It cannot indeed be denied, that the ſkill, by which they were planned, equals the vaſtneſs of the labour with which they were completed: but then, it is evident that they never could be uſeful, in any degree adequate to the toil and expence with which they were erected.—This ſuppoſition, however, is entirely groundleſs: for the Iſraelites were employed in making *bricks*; while it is well known that the pyramids were built of hewn ſtone.—But whatever were the works, in which the Iſraelites were compelled to ſerve; the Egyptians could give as good reaſons for thus cruelly oppreſſing the Iſraelites, as any at this day can urge in favour of the *ſlave trade*: the ſum of which arguments is as follows: 'Without this oppreſſion we cannot amaſs ſuch large 'eſtates, nor gratify our ſenſual appetites with ſuch re-'fined exceſs.'

V. 15. *Hebrew*, &c.] It ſeems moſt natural to ſuppoſe theſe midwives, who thus feared God, to have been Hebrew women, and not Egyptians appointed to this office, as ſome have conjectured. Pharaoh might think that he could awe or bribe them into compliance, though in ſo inhuman and treacherous a conduct to their own nation: for princes are not often refuſed in ſuch caſes. We may conſider theſe two as the chief of the midwives, whoſe conduct would influence that of the others; for there muſt have been many.

V. 16. *If it be a daughter*, &c.] Pharaoh and his ſervants did not fear female ſlaves, however numerous, but accounted them their riches.

done this thing, and have ſaved the men-children alive?

19 And the midwives ſaid unto Pharaoh, becauſe the Hebrew women *are* not as the Egyptian women: for they *are* lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty.

21 And it came to paſs, becauſe the midwives feared God, that he made them houſes.

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, ſaying, Every ſon that is born ye ſhall caſt into the river, and every daughter ye ſhall ſave alive.

V. 19. *Are lively*, &c.] Through the peculiar bleſſing of God, we may ſuppoſe, that this was generally the caſe; yet not ſo but that the midwives might have had many opportunities of murdering the infants, had they been ſo diſpoſed. Provided we do not ſpeak falſehood; the ſtricteſt veracity does not at all times require us to ſpeak all we know, though our ſilence ſhould lead men into error; if ſuch error be no injury to them, or to others: and ſilence muſt ſtill more evidently be allowable; when it prevents the commiſſion of ſin.—When, however, perſons act uprightly in the fear of God, though there be infirmity mixed with it, the Lord graciouſly *pardons* the infirmity, and recompenſes the good intention.

V. 21. *Made them houſes*, &c.] God rewarded their concurrence in the increaſe and proſperity of Iſrael, by the increaſe and proſperity of their own families.

V. 22. *Pharaoh charged*, &c.] Probably Pharaoh propoſed conſiderable rewards for ſuch a ſervice. Thus the land would be filled with mercenary informers and murderers: numbers of infants would doubtleſs be ſlain in the arms, and before the eyes of their diſtreſſed and almoſt diſtracted mothers: and had not he, who ſays to the ſwelling ocean, "Hitherto ſhalt thou go and no further," undertaken for the increaſe of Iſrael, they muſt have been deſolated.—Pharaoh at this time, as Herod long after, proved his relation to that great dragon, who ſought to deſtroy the man-child as ſoon as it was born. (*Rev.* xii. 4.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The very titles of theſe two firſt books remind us, that the hiſtory of man is little more than a narrative of his beginning, and of his departure. Thus one generation is ſwept away after another, and nothing remains except the names of a very few, and ſome of them covered with infamy. Happy they, whoſe names are written in the Book of Life; and enrolled there as true Iſraelites, and heirs of Heaven!—How ſoon may the ſun of proſperity be darkened by the deepeſt cloud of adverſity! and the place of our refuge become the ſcene of our miſery! our beſt friends ſucceeded by enemies, and our beſt ſervices repaid with ingratitude! We ſhould therefore truſt the Lord alone: for as nothing can haſten the accompliſhment of his purpoſe before the appointed time; ſo nothing can retard it when that ſeaſon arrives.—For the ſpace of above 200 years, whilſt Abraham, Iſaac, Jacob, and their families, had lived at liberty, in peace, and in conſiderable proſperity and affluence, they were only increaſed to 70 perſons: but afterwards in about the ſame number of years, under much oppreſſion and cruel bondage, they multiplied into a large nation: nor did their moſt rapid increaſe commence till after the death of Joſeph, their chief friend; for God will ſecure to himſelf the glory of fulfilling his own promiſes. Thus was the Chriſtian church more eſpecially increaſed after the death of Jeſus; and thus hath vital religion, in all ages, moſt proſpered under the preſſure of ſevere perſecutions. By this the Lord covers his enemies with confuſion as with a cloke, and teaches his people not to fear them, who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.—It is an old practice of the accuſer of the brethren and his inſtruments, to vindicate their cruel treatment of God's people, by aſperſing their characters, pretending to ſuſpect them of bad deſigns, or averring that their increaſe would be dangerous to the ſtate: They therefore ſhould endeavour, by well-doing and patient ſuffering, to confute ſuch calumnies, and prove themſelves quiet and uſeful members of ſociety. But though we may ſuffer unjuſtly from man, yet God is *juſt* in all that he inflicts upon us by their inſtrumentality: and it is a ſingular favour to be kept from ſinful compliances or conformity to the world, though by ſharp corrections.—That which politicians call acting wiſely, the word of God oft denominates deceit, injuſtice, cruelty, yea folly, for ſuch wiſdom is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh, and ſuch wiſe perſons are eventually taken in their own craftineſs.—There is no degree of treachery and inhumanity, to which the ſpirit of perſecution will not prompt; and they who are actuated by it, will ſeldom fail of finding inſtruments, as deſtitute of honour and conſcience as themſelves.—But if they meet with thoſe, who truly *fear God*, neither bribes, nor terrors, will prevail upon them to ſin againſt him: and God will plead their cauſe, and recompenſe their conſcientious diſobedience to the unlawful commands of men.—But as we ſee in this hiſtory, the church of God groaning under perſecution; ſo we may, by viewing the object in another light, ſee the miſerable condition of Satan's wretched bond-ſlaves; who are ſo enſlaved to their luſts that they never can deliver themſelves, however miſerable or affrighted, until the Lord ſend them redemption by his word and powerful grace. Nor ſhould we here forget, that this enemy, who by Pharaoh aimed to deſtroy the church in its very infancy, is equally buſy to ſtifle the firſt riſings of ſerious reflections in the heart of man; and thence to take away the ſeed of the word, leſt we ſhould believe and be ſaved; leſt theſe feeble beginnings ſhould increaſe, and we grow ſtrong enough to renounce his ſervice.—Let them therefore, who would eſcape, take earneſt heed to the things which they hear, be afraid of ſinning againſt the teſtimony of their conſciences, and cry fervently to the Lord for deliverance without delay, and with perſevering conſtancy.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. The birth of Moſes, the perils of his infancy, and his preſervation by Pharaoh's daughter, v. 1—6. *2d. His mother employed to nurſe him, and his education in Pharaoh's court, v.* 7—10. *3d. His viſiting his brethren, ſlaying an Egyptian, aud flight upon the diſcovery, v.* 11—15. *4th. His being entertained and employed by the prieſt of Midian, his marriage and offspring, v.* 16—22. *5th. The death of Pharaoh, the continuance of Iſrael's bondage, and God regarding their groans and cries, v.* 20—25.

AND there went a man of the houſe of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a ſon: and when ſhe ſaw him that he *was a* goodly *child*, ſhe hid him three months.

3 And when ſhe could not longer hide him, ſhe took for him an ark of bulruſhes, and daubed it with ſlime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and ſhe laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his ſiſter ſtood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to waſh herſelf at the river, and her maidens walked along by the river's ſide: and when ſhe ſaw the ark among the flags, ſhe ſent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when ſhe had opened *it*, ſhe ſaw the child: and behold the babe wept. And ſhe had compaſſion on him, and ſaid, This *is one* of the Hebrew's children.

7 Then ſaid his ſiſter to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurſe of the Hebrew women, that ſhe may nurſe the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Take this child away and nurſe it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nurſed it.

10 And the child grew, and ſhe brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her ſon. And ſhe called his name Moſes: and ſhe ſaid, Becauſe I drew him out of the water.

11 And

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 2. *Bare a ſon*, &c.] Miriam, Moſes' ſiſter, muſt have been at leaſt ten years older than he, as it is evident from the hiſtory of this chapter. Aaron was three years older than Moſes. It does not appear that Amram and Jochebed, (vi. 20,) had any difficulty in preſerving the life of Aaron; whence we may infer, that the laſt bloody edict was not then enacted. Now Aaron was born 83 years before the Exodus, and Joſeph died about 145 years before that event: therefore the edict could not be paſſed leſs than 62 years after the death of Joſeph. But how long that prince, who knew not Joſeph, had reigned before that edict was made is not known.—Moſes when born appeared to be a goodly child: The notice taken of this circumſtance in ſeveral places, indicates that ſomething extraordinary was obſerved in the child, which was conſidered as an intimation of his future greatneſs. (*Acts* vii. 26. *Heb.* xi. 23.) His mother therefore hid him three months; which the Apoſtle informs was done in faith. Either ſhe had ſome peculiar aſſurance given of his preſervation, or in general believing the promiſes of deliverance to Iſrael, ſhe was encouraged to conceal her infant in dependence upon God, though perhaps at the hazard of her own life.

V. 3. *She could*, &c.] Having probably had ſome intimation that ſhe was diſcovered, and expecting that the executioners would come and murder him in her houſe and before her eyes.—She took for him an ark, or a ſmall baſket: this alſo ſhe did in faith; not yet deſpairing of his preſervation, but expecting ſome providential interpoſition in his behalf; under the ſecret guidance of the Lord ſhe uſed this unlikely expedient, as the beſt ſhe could do.—This ſhe put in the flags, and in this ſituation the infant muſt ſoon have periſhed by the cold, or the water, or by the crocodiles with which that river abounds, had not relief been ſpeedily afforded.

V. 4. *His ſiſter*, &c.] Doubtleſs by her mother's orders, to watch what would become of the child; perhaps intending to have taken him home again in the evening, if nothing had intervened; and to have carried him out again in the morning, that if ſought after he might not have been found.

V. 5. *And the daughter*, &c.] Had any other perſons except the king's daughter and attendants found the child, they would not have dared to have preſerved its life, had they been ſo diſpoſed; but God ſecretly influenced her to walk that way at that criſis: And his providence is to be noticed in ſuch apparently minute events, on which the moſt important conſequences depend; for even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

V. 8. *Said to her, Go.*] Here again we muſt notice the ſecret interpoſition of God; for had humanity induced her to bring up the infant, it might have been expected, that ſhe would have employed an Egyptian woman to nurſe it;

EXODUS CH. II. VE. VI.

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11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14 And he said; Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* you are come so soon to day?

19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock.

20 And

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it: but he in whose hand is every human heart, ordered it otherwise.

V. 10. *He became her son*, &c.] Moses was adopted, educated, and provided for as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Tradition reports that she was his only child, and had no offspring of her own, and that Moses was looked upon as presumptive heir to the crown.—We know however from better authority, that "he was learned in all the wisdom "of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in "deeds." He was certainly much trusted and employed, and there acquired those accomplishments, which were afterwards requisite for him, in the important services of standing before Pharaoh, and governing Israel.

V. 11. *Was grown.*] Moses at this time was forty years of age. (*Acts* vii. 23.) Before this we may suppose that he lived as an Egyptian, and such a life, as men generally do in those high stations, without much regarding his oppressed brethren. But then he went out to his brethren, with deliberate purpose of renouncing the honours, wealth, and pleasures of his rank amongst the Egpytians, to cast his lot among Abraham's seed, and to participate in their privileges, especially their relation to the promised Saviour; for the sake of which he was willing to share in the reproach and affliction, which they endured as the people of God. (*Heb.* xi. 24—26.) We may suppose that his mother had informed him of his real descent, and he would naturally feel some feeble attachment to his people: But *these effects* proceeded from a more powerful cause: by the grace of God he was partaker of that faith which overcomes the world; and supremely valuing the blessings of the new covenant through the Redeemer, he was willing not only to risk, but to renounce and suffer all for his sake; assured that Israel was the people of God, and that the promises made to them would certainly be accomplished. He had also some indubitable intimations that he was appointed to deliver Israel; and he went out to seek an opportunity of so doing: perhaps he intended openly to join their interests, and expected that they would welcome him amongst them, and concur with him in suitable measures.

V. 12. *He slew*, &c.] Moses considered himself as acting under a divine commission, in defence of the oppressed, and executing just punishment on the oppressor; and he supposed that the Israelites would have understood the same: but their spirits were sunk, their dispositions servile, and faith and hope almost extinguished amongst them.

V. 14. *Feared*, &c.] Moses having irritated the Egyptians against him, by thus joining the interests and espousing the cause of Israel, and exciting them to revolt; and finding that the Hebrews were not disposed to concur with him, deemed his only security to lie in flight. Perhaps he was too hasty both in the attempt, and in leaving the country; if, however he *feared* on this occasion, he did not afterwards fear the wrath of the king.—Thus the deliverance of Israel was delayed forty years, because they rejected their deliverer: in the mean time Egypt filled up, and Canaan was filling up, the measure of their iniquities; the Israelites were still increasing; and Moses was learning to endure hardship, to exercise faith, patience, and meekness, and to walk with God in the lowly and retired life of a shepherd.

V. 16. *Priest of Midian.*] Or *prince*. Probably Reuel was both priest and prince of some small district upon the eastern shore of the Red Sea; and still retained amongst his people some knowledge of the true God, and regard to his worship.

V. 17. *The shepherds*, &c.] Perhaps these were the servants of some other neighbouring person, who was rich in flocks and herds. The scarcity of water in those hot and sandy regions gave occasion to these contentions.

20 And he ſaid unto his daughters, And where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* ye have left the man? Call him that he may eat bread.

21 And Moſes was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moſes Zipporah his daughter.

22 And ſhe bare *him* a ſon, and he called his name Gerſhom: for he ſaid, I have been a ſtranger in a ſtrange land.

23 And it came to paſs in proceſs of time, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Iſrael ſighed by reaſon of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reaſon of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Iſaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God looked upon the children of Iſrael, and God had reſpect unto *them*.

CHAP.

V. 21. *Moſes was content*, &c.] This was a rare example of one brought up, as Moſes had been, ſubmitting chearfully to ſo laborious a buſineſs, and to be a ſervant alſo in that employment! yet without doubt theſe forty years were the happieſt of his life.

V. 22. *Gerſhom.*] That is *a ſtranger*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould take occaſion from reading of the cruel ſcenes, which theſe Hebrew parents witneſſed, and the bitter anxieties which they felt, to be thankful that we can bring up our children with ſecurity and comfort. Still however our offſpring are expoſed to ſo many perils, that the tender heart of a tender parent muſt often heave with anxious ſighs about them: except as we are enabled by the prayer of faith to commit them to the care of the Almighty; and uſe all means for their welfare, temporal and ſpiritual, in dependence upon his providence and grace. Then indeed, we ſhall be prepared for every event: if the Lord has any ſervice for them to perform for him, he will preſerve their lives, though in the midſt of dangers; and ſurely every chriſtian parent would rather reſign the deareſt infant to death, than wiſh it to live wicked, miſchievous, and miſerable. And methinks our gracious God ſays to the believer, when preſenting his infant offſpring to him in baptiſm, or pouring out his prayers in its behalf, take home this child, and bring it up for me, and I will pay thee thy wages: in obedience to his command, and in expectation of his bleſſing, let us bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and chearfully leave the event with him.—Even amongſt the blood-thirſty Egyptians we meet with a beautiful example of humanity, which will riſe up in judgment againſt, and condemn the conduct of, numbers who live under the light of revelation, and are called chriſtians; but who are ſo far from compaſſionating the children of others, that they are indolently and negligently cruel to their own offſpring.—They, who carefully watch the conduct of God's providence, will experience many ſignal interpoſitions in their favour; which will excite their admiration and gratitude, ſtrengthen their faith, and encourage their hope for the future, and thus well recompenſe their attention. They ſhall find their wants ſupplied, perhaps even from their very enemies; their ſharpeſt trials end moſt comfortably; and God taking care in his providence to qualify them and their's for whatever ſervice, or ſituations he intends them. He very often furniſhes the minds of thoſe, whom he means to employ, with ſuch acquiſitions of knowledge, whilſt they are ignorant and careleſs about religion, as they will have much uſe for afterwards, but would not have attended to, had they previouſly minded the one thing needful.—What a powerful principle is the faith, which the word of God inſiſts upon? How it overcomes the love of the World, and the fear of the croſs, even when they oppoſe it with their utmoſt force! The favour of God, an intereſt in Chriſt, and an inheritance amongſt his people, are the pre-eminent objects of every believer's deſire: this joined to the love of Chriſt, and attachment to his cauſe, prepares them for making every required ſacrifice: and that faith, which refuſes to do ſo is not genuine. But they, who boldly enter upon ſervices for God, muſt not only expect fierce oppoſition from enemies, but great diſcouragement from the lukewarmneſs, contempt, cowardice, and ingratitude of the profeſſed ſervants of God. And whilſt the contentions amongſt brethren diſgrace and weaken the common cauſe of religion; he that would ſet them at one again, however gently, muſt expect to be reproached as taking too much upon him; perhaps by both parties, but aſſuredly by the party that is moſt in the wrong, which is always moſt impatient of controul. Yet theſe diſappointments help to correct the forwardneſs and ſelf-ſufficiency of haſty zeal, and to prepare men for their work in its due ſeaſon. But our impatience is apt to interpret delays as denials, and to yield to diſcouragement when we ſhould only be humbled; and from raſh impetuoſity to ſink into unbelieving negligence. And perhaps it requires ſtronger faith to be contented in obſcurity and neglect, chearfully to labour without any proſpect of applauſe, and patiently to prepare and wait for future opportunities of ſervice without deſpondency; than to face danger, out-brave reproach, and ſuffer perſecution in ſome eminent ſphere of uſefulneſs. But the providence of God will find a refuge, and raiſe up friends, for his people; communion with him, will ſweeten every ſolitude, and trial; and it is our wiſdom to inure ourſelves to ſelf-denial, that we may be fit for whatever is before us. To aſſiſt the weak and vindicate the oppreſſed, to ſhew kindneſs and uſe hoſpitality, and requite thoſe who have been ſerviceable to us, are always becoming: nor is modeſt diligence, in any buſineſs, a diſgrace to the daughters either of a prince, or a prieſt.—When aſſiſtance appears to us moſt

diſtant

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1*ſt. Moſes humbly employed as a ſhepherd, v.* 1. 2*d. The Lord appearing to him in a flame of fire in a Buſh, v.* 2—6. 3*d. God's compaſſion for Iſrael, and his appointment of Moſes to deliver them, with inſtructions, and aſſurances of ſucceſs, v.* 7—22.

NOW Moſes kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the prieſt of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-ſide of the deſert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.

2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midſt of a buſh: and he looked, and behold, the buſh burned with fire, and the buſh *was* not conſumed.

3 And Moſes ſaid, I will now turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh is not burnt.

4 And when the LORD ſaw that he turned aſide to ſee, God called unto him out of the midſt of the buſh, and ſaid, Moſes, Moſes. And he ſaid, Here *am* I.

5 And he ſaid, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy ſhoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou ſtandeſt *is* holy ground.

6 Moreover he ſaid, *I am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moſes hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And

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diſtant, and deliverance moſt improbable, matters are frequently faſt ripening for them: to God all things are eaſy and his whole plan lies before him. He remembers his holy covenant; and for the purpoſes of his own glory, he will appear for his people notwithſtanding their ſins. Even their groans, extorted by oppreſſion, have a ſhare of his compaſſionate attention; and in the darkeſt night of affliction, when they begin to cry to him, the day of deliverance will ſpeedily dawn. Finally, if Satan's work ceaſes not for want of a ſucceſſion of inſtruments; the Lord will certainly furniſh labourers for his harveſt, in all ages unto the end of the world.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *Jethro.*] It is not certain whether Jethro be the ſame perſon as Reuel mentioned in the former chapter, or his ſon and Moſes' brother in law; which the word alſo ſignifies: The Septuagint makes them to be the ſame perſon, uſing the two names indiſcriminately.—Horeb was called "the mountain of God," by way of anticipation; for Moſes wrote for thoſe, who knew it by that title after the law was there given.—Sinai and Horeb are ſuppoſed to be two ſummits of a mountain, which had the ſame baſe.

V. 2. *The angel,* &c.] This angel is afterwards called Jehovah; "God called to him out of the midſt of the "buſh;" and the ſame perſon ſays, I AM THAT I AM. With what propriety can this kind of phraſeology be uſed, in a revelation expreſſly intended to inſtruct men in the knowledge and worſhip of the true God, and to withdraw them from idolatry of every kind; if we allow not the doctrine of the coequality and deity of the Son of God; and that he is the ſpeaker in this place?—Fire is a ſcriptural emblem of the divine holineſs and juſtice; of that vengeance, which in his righteous indignation God inflicts on ſinners; of the afflictions and trials, by which he proves and purifies his people, whether immediately from himſelf, or by inſtruments; and even of that baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, by which the droſs of ſinful affections is conſumed, and the ſoul transformed into his own nature and image.—This fire was ſeen in a buſh, and not in a cedar. A buſh is mean, and uſeleſs except for fuel, but eaſily and ſpeedily burnt: yet the buſh was not conſumed. The emblem was immediately intended to deſcribe the ſtate of Iſrael in Egypt, their meanneſs and unworthineſs, their extreme affliction, and their marvellous preſervation by the power and preſence of God. But Iſrael was in this a type of the Church expoſed to perſecution, and of a believer grievouſly haraſſed by temptations.

V. 4. *Moſes, Moſes,* &c.] We have not read of any appearance of the Lord, ſince Jacob's deſcent into Egypt above 200 years before.—Moſes, thus addreſſed by name, muſt have been as much ſurpriſed by what he heard, as by what he ſaw.

V. 5. *Draw not nigh,* &c.] Moſes might at a diſtance contemplate the object before him, for his inſtruction and encouragement, for which it was intended; but he muſt not gratify his curioſity by particular examination. Thus divine myſteries, reverently believed and meditated on, are profitable to our ſouls; but curiouſly and preſumptuouſly intruded into, they become the occaſion of our ſin and miſery.—He was directed to put off his ſhoes, as an external cuſtomary token of humble reverence; for that ſpot became holy ground by this viſion of the Almighty, and was thus to be regarded by him. (*Gen.* xxviii. 16, 17. *Eccleſ.* v. 1. *Joſh.* v. 13—15.)

V. 6. *I am the God,* &c.] The Lord was the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, being the object of their worſhip, confidence, love, and obedience; and their ſalvation, portion, and everlaſting recompence. We are conſtituted of body and ſoul, and if the Lord be our God, he ſtands engaged to bleſs both body and ſoul for ever; which implies that the ſoul enters at death upon immortal felicity; and that the body ſhall riſe again to

7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows.

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall* be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? What shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And

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share this felicity. (*Matt.* xxii. 31, 32.) This declaration was intended to remind the Israelites of the promises made to their fathers, especially with reference to the land of Canaan.

V. 7. *I have surely seen.*] Or, *Seeing I have seen:* that is, I have seen with attention and compassion, "the "afflictions of my people."—Notwithstanding the ignorance, idolatry, and vice, which prevailed amongst the Israelites: yet the Lord acknowledged them as his people, because of their relation to Abraham, because they constituted the visible Church, and because there was a remnant of true Israelites amongst them.—The severity of their task-masters extorted their bitter cries, which were in most of them those of distress, not of faith; the prayer of nature, not of grace: Yet the Lord noticed and pitied their sorrows.—Nature seeks deliverance from suffering, grace wrestles for deliverance from sin.—Perhaps they almost universally despaired of deliverance; and Moses having been forty years a shepherd, expected and desired no other than to live and die in that situation, and had given up all thoughts of delivering Israel; yet now the very time was come!

V. 8. *I am come down*, &c.] This was spoken after the manner of men, and expressed with energy the intent of God's appearance to Moses.

V. 11. *Who am I*, &c?] Formerly Moses deemed himself competent to this work, and set himself to it, perhaps too hastily: now, when he was unspeakably better qualified with wisdom, experience, patience, meekness, stedfastness, humility, and piety; and was without competition the most fit person on earth for it, he was become consciously insufficient. This was in a great measure the effect of increasing knowledge of God, and of himself: But there was also a deep sense of the vast difficulty of the business, not without some culpable fear of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and of contempt and opposition from Israel. Formerly self-confidence mingled with, and assumed the appearance of, strong faith and great zeal: now some degree of sinful distrust of God crept in under the garb of deep humility, and associated with it; and induced him timidly to shift, as well as humbly to decline, the important service: so very defective are the strongest graces, and the best duties of the most eminent saints!

V. 12. *Certainly I will be*, &c.] All objections, expressed or implied, were thus answered in one word. 'As I send thee, I will certainly go with thee; and then 'all thy insufficiency, and all possible difficulties can form 'no hindrance at all.'—The token annexed was made, not to sense, but to faith; and therefore the sign was consequent to the event confirmed by it: as if God had said, 'I promise to meet thee and Israel at this mountain: 'this promise is thy assurance of success; depend on my 'power and faithfulness, and go fetch them forth nothing 'doubting.' Such a token is indeed no confirmation to an unbeliever; but faith gives God credit, and takes his promises of future blessings in prompt payment. (*Isaiah* vii. 14.)

V. 13. *What is his name?* &c.] Moses had seen enough in Egypt, forty years before, to convince him of Israel's ignorance and ungodliness; and he knew that nature's progress in religious concerns is from bad to worse. He was therefore apprehensive, that they would scarcely understand, much less believe him, when he spake to them of the God of their fathers. He had before been scornfully asked, "who made him a ruler, and a judge over "them?" and he had not his answer ready: but if he go at this time, he would have fuller instructions, and better authenticated credentials.

V. 14. *I AM THAT I AM.*] This name signifies '*I am he that exists*,' and implies, self-existence, independence, unchangeableness, incomprehensibility, eternity, and consummate perfection. "I am, and there is none "else

15 And God ſaid moreover unto Moſes, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob, hath ſent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go and gather the elders of Iſrael together, and ſay unto them, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, ſaying, I have ſurely viſited you, and *ſeen* that which is done to you in Egypt.

17 And I have ſaid, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebuſites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

18 And they ſhall hearken to thy voice: and thou ſhalt come, thou and the elders of Iſrael, unto the king of Egypt, and you ſhall ſay unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, (we beſeech thee,) three days journey into the wilderneſs, that we may ſacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 And I am ſure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

20 And I will ſtretch out my hand, and ſmite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midſt thereof: and after that he will let you go.

21 And I will give this people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians: and it ſhall come to paſs, that when ye go, ye ſhall not go empty.

22 But

"elſe beſide me." All elſe have their being from God, and are entirely dependent on him. There is a majeſtic ſimplicity, and an expreſſive dignity in this language, which diſgraces beneath contempt the high ſounding pompous titles, which mortals have been proud to arrogate to themſelves.—*JEHOVAH*, (a name of ſimilar ſignification,) thus diſtinguiſhes himſelf from the idols of the nations, which are nothing in the world; and from all creatures, which have only a derived, dependent, mutable, exiſtence, in him, and from him: thus he propoſes himſelf as the only object of his people's worſhip, the ſure foundation of their hopes, and the all-ſufficient fountain of their felicity. *I AM THAT I AM.* Not *I was*, but *I am*, and will be. With him paſt, preſent, and to come are all one. Let us not forget him, whom the Apoſtle declares to be, "the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever:" (*Heb.* xiii. 8;) whom another Apoſtle introduces ſaying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the firſt, and the laſt, (*Rev.* i. 8—11—17;) and who, dwelling in human fleſh ſaid, with a noble diſregard to the rules of human language, "Before "Abraham was *I AM.*" (*John* vii. 58:) Which evident aſſumption of this title, *I AM THAT I AM*, the unbelieving Jews at that day fully underſtood, and for it attempted to ſtone him; though modern unbelievers cannot, or will not perceive it. There is no doubt, however, but the ſpeaker is the ſame in both places; "for "no man hath ſeen God, at any time, the only begotten "Son, who is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared "him," (*John* i. 18.) When the Lord ſubjoined "I "AM hath ſent me unto you," it was intended to give authority to the meſſage, and to enſure the accompliſhment of its intention, by his incomprehenſible power and perfection.

V. 15. *The Lord God of*, &c.] This title would remind the Iſraelites of his relation to them as the ſeed of Abraham, and of his engagements to them.—The Lord had before declared his *name*, as ſignifying eternal ſelf-exiſtence; and he here adds *his covenant relation* to the Seed of Abraham, as the perpetual memorial of his former mercies, and engagements of future bleſſings to his Church. The moſt uſeful knowledge of God is derived from conſidering his works, and his promiſes.—He therefore delights more in being remembered, by the manifeſted glories of his love to his Church, than by the eſſential glories of his nature.

V. 18. *They ſhall hearken*, &c.] Such a willingneſs to be delivered, as ſufficed to induce them to uſe the means, encounter the difficulties, and face the dangers, requiſite for that purpoſe, was ſo contrary to Iſrael's diſpirited and deſponding frame of mind, that it could only be effected by the powerful influence of God upon their hearts.

V. 19. *No not*, &c.] He, who engaged for Iſrael's willingneſs, warned Moſes of Pharaoh's obſtinate and final unwillingneſs, that he might know what to expect.

V. 20. *Will let you go*, &c.] Pharaoh reluctantly conſented, when under the ſmart of God's judgments and the terror of imminent deſtruction: though he retracted that conſent, and periſhed in oppoſing Iſrael's departure.

V. 21, 22.] The Lord thus declared his power over the human heart, which by his providential diſpenſations, and by unperceived influence, he can diſpoſe as he pleaſe: The circumſtances, in which the Egyptians were placed, were over-ruled to induce multitudes of them to favour Iſrael; whilſt others were thereby hardened to their deſtruction.—The Iſraelites were directed to *borrow*, or to *aſk*, of the Egyptians, their richeſt furniture and ornaments: and, he, who is the great proprietor of all things, and giveth to all men as he pleaſes, ſeeing the Egyptians enriched by oppreſſing the Iſraelites; thus conſtrained them to refund, and to pay them the wages which their labour juſtly deſerved.—A great part of this gold and ſilver was uſed in building and furniſhing the tabernacle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord long exerciſes the faith and patience of his ſervants, who ſeek his glory and ſubmit to his ap-

22 But every woman ſhall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that ſojourneth in her houſe, jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye ſhall put *them* upon your ſons, and upon your daughters; and ye ſhall ſpoil the Egyptians.

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pointments, they may be ſure that it is in wiſdom and faithfulneſs; and that when they are ripe for the bleſſings for which they wait, and the beſt time is come, they ſhall be richly recompenſed: but ſuch is the human heart, that the beſt of men generally need preparing, by a long courſe of humiliating diſcipline, for behaving in proſperity in a manner honourable to God and religion. It is therefore "good that a man ſhould both hope, and *quietly* wait for "the Salvation of the Lord:" (*Lam.* iii. 26.) *Quietly* and *patiently*, but not *ſlothfully*: for the Lord always requires his ſervants to be employed, and meets them at their employments; and the meaneſt honeſt labour is more reputable to the greateſt characters, than indolence and inactivity.—The diſcoveries of himſelf, which God vouchſafes us in his holy word and in his works, are to be regarded with reverent attention, at an equal diſtance from contemptuous indifference and bold curioſity.—Whatever ſtands in relation to God, is conſecrated, and made holy, and muſt be thus regarded by us: and though bodily exerciſe profiteth little; yet it is proper to expreſs our inward reverence and adoration by ſuch external tokens as are cuſtomary and ſignificant: ſuch a decent exterior behaviour may be hypocritical; but the neglect of it betrays a heart not properly impreſſed with awe of the majeſty and purity of God, nor ſuitably humbled under the ſenſe of meanneſs and unworthineſs. Nor does the condeſcending kindneſs of the Lord, the liberty which he allows, or the relations with which he honours us, tend to remove, but to increaſe this holy awe: in the very epiſtle in which we are bid "to *come boldly* to the throne "of grace," we are alſo commanded "to ſerve God with "reverence, and godly fear." (*Heb.* iv. 16. x. 19—22. xii. 28, 29.)—In accommodation to our infirmities our gracious God condeſcends to preach to our ſenſes, as well as to our underſtandings; and in this burning buſh he teaches us many an uſeful leſſon. We need not tremble for the Church of God in its loweſt eſtate, though it appear contemptible to the carnal eye, and ſeem ready to be conſumed by the fierce flames of perſecution; for the Lord is in the buſh, and it cannot be injured.—Though we ſhould ſympathize with, we need be apprehenſive for, the tempted and afflicted Chriſtian: he is in himſelf indeed a worthleſs buſh and on fire; but he is perfectly ſafe and highly honoured, for the Lord is with him. Never was buſh ſo honourable as this, in which Jehovah dwelt, though it was on fire: and ſince the Son of God dwelt in frail human nature, and paſſed through the hotteſt fire of Satan's temptations, of the world's hatred, and of the wrath of God for our ſins; we need not be apprehenſive about any poor burning buſh, in which Jehovah dwells, (2 *Cor.* vi. 8—10.) Whilſt men are ſtrengthened to maintain the conflict, and perſevere in the path of duty, they are not deſerted of God, whatever their fears or feelings may be: nor can the fire, however hot, conſume any thing but the droſs of remaining ſinful inclinations. But let the mere profeſſor trem-

ble, who is exempt from temptation, oppoſition, or conflict, becauſe he ſwims with the ſtream and walks according to the courſe of this world: the fire is not there, becauſe the Lord is not there, and he is a worthleſs buſh and nothing better. Let the careleſs and preſumptuous ſinner tremble; for he is fit fuel for the fire of God's vengeance, which will burn for ever, but never conſume thoſe who finally ſink under it.—Oppreſſors alſo ſhould remember, that, however they may elude, or out-brave human juſtice, and however God may defer to take vengeance; yet that all their crimes are noted in his book; that their meaſure of iniquity is filling up; that they ſhall ſpeedily be made to diſgorge the prey, which they have ravenouſly devoured, and experience the vengeance of the Almighty: unleſs repentance and fruits meet for repentance prevent their doom, (*Luke* xix. 8, 9.) And let the oppreſſed recollect, that God is their peculiar patron, that he counts their ſighs and groans; and if he anſwer the mere cry of diſtreſs; "ſhall he not avenge his own elect, which "cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with "them? Yea he will avenge them ſpeedily:" (*Luke* xviii. 7.) But when he comes to avenge his people on their oppreſſors, will he find faith on the earth? Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; and though faith will not totally fail, yet at ſuch times it will often be very feeble, and our expectations even of promiſed bleſſings very languid. Alas! that we ſhould ſo diſhonour his power, faithfulneſs, and love! But he is the great I AM; a thouſand years with him is but as one day: he remembers his holy covenant, he deals with his people according to the multitude of his mercies, he forgives the multitude of their tranſgreſſions, and ſends deliverance in it's appointed ſeaſon.—When God employs us in his work, he will certainly go with us; and "before honour is humility." Uſefulneſs is frequently delayed, or denied to inſtruments otherwiſe qualified, becauſe they poſſeſs not an humble ſpirit. Yet nothing good is unalloyed in man, and the moſt unaffected humility may prove an occaſion to irreſolution, or reluctance to the work which the Lord requires of us. They, who would be uſeful, muſt depend upon the Lord to make their endeavours acceptable to their brethren: (*Rom.* xv. 31.) eſpecially where ſuch benefits are intended, as require them to exert themſelves, to endure hardſhip, and to face danger, in ſecuring them: and, if we go in this dependence, God will ſecure our ſucceſs with ſome; though we muſt deliver our meſſage to all, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. But in Pharaoh's tyranny, and Iſrael's oppreſſion, we ſee a picture of Satan's uſurpation, and the ſinner's miſerable and abject ſubmiſſion: however galled with the yoke, he ſtill drudges on, till the Lord ſends redemption: with the invitations of his goſpel, he communicates the teachings of his Spirit; thus men are made willing to ſeek and ſtrive for deliverance; conſequently Satan loſes his power to retain them; they come forth with all they have and are, and conſecrate all to the glory of God, and the ſervice of his Church.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes's further objections, and the Lord's anſwer by miracles and promiſes, v. 1—12. *2d. Moſes ſtill excuſing himſelf; and the Lord angry with him, yet appointing Aaron to aſſiſt him, v.* 13—17. *3d. Moſes taking his leave of Jethro, and ſetting out on his journey, v.* 18—20.—*4th. The Lord's meſſage to Pharaoh, v.* 21—23. *5th. Moſes in danger by the way, but delivered; met by Aaron, and welcomed by Iſrael, v.* 24—31.

AND Moſes anſwered, and ſaid, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will ſay, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

2 And the LORD ſaid unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he ſaid, A rod.

3 And he ſaid, Caſt it on the ground; and he caſt it on the ground, and it became a ſerpent: and Moſes fled from before it.

4 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.

5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

6 And the Lord ſaid furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy boſom: and he put his hand into his boſom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as ſnow.

7 And he ſaid, Put thine hand into thy boſom again: and he put his hand into his boſom again, and plucked it out of his boſom, and behold, it was turned again as his *other* fleſh.

8 And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the firſt ſign, that they will believe the voice of the latter ſign.

9 And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will not believe alſo theſe two ſigns, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou ſhalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry-land: and the water, which thou takeſt out of the river, ſhall become blood upon the dry-land.

10 And Moſes ſaid unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor ſince thou haſt ſpoken unto thy ſervant: but I *am* ſlow of ſpeech, and of a ſlow tongue.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the ſeeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—5.] The Lord, in order to anſwer the unreaſonable objection which Moſes ſtarted, excited his attention, by demanding what he held in his hand, which was probably a common ſtick, or ſhepherd's crook; but it was thus conſecrated to the ſacred ſervice of God, to be the token of his preſence and operation: and therefore called the rod of God, (20.)—It was alſo the type of the preached Goſpel, which is called the rod of his power, (*Pſalms*, cx. 2.) Whence Moſes might learn that God can employ the meaneſt inſtruments in the moſt important ſervices.—This rod, when it was waved by the hand of Moſes, was a token to Iſrael of guidance, encouragement, and protection; but to Egypt, it became deſtructive as a ſerpent. Thus the word of God is to ſome a ſavour of life unto life, and to others of death unto death. (2 *Cor.* ii. 16.)—By this circumſtance, which Moſes alone witneſſed, the Lord directed the future performance of this miracle before Iſrael, and aſſured him that he ſhould thus convince them of his divine commiſſion.

V. 6, 7.] Theſe repeated miracles denoted that God could eaſily remove Iſrael's ſin, though they were unclean as the leprous hand; could employ Moſes's miniſtry, though it were feeble and unworthy in itſelf; and could by him inflict upon, and remove from, Egypt his plagues at pleaſure.

V. 10. *I am not eloquent*, &c.] Moſes ſuppoſed, that he ſhould want much eloquence, both to perſuade Iſrael, and plead before Pharaoh; and he objected, that in the Egyptian Court he had never been remarkable for eloquence, but rather defective in the gift of ready utterance: and that even ſince the Lord had called him, and he had underſtood that he was to be employed in this ſervice, he had experienced no alteration in this reſpect. We read, however, that he was *mighty in word*; and ſo was Paul, though he affected no eloquence, and was deemed by ſome "in ſpeech contemptible:" they could either of them ſpeak with energy, and to the purpoſe, though not with the enticing words and deluſive charms of human oratory.

V. 11. *Who hath made*, &c.] The Lord alone is the

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay.

13 And he ſaid, O my Lord, ſend I pray thee, by the hand *of him whom* thou wilt ſend.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt Moſes, and he ſaid, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can ſpeak well. And alſo behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he ſeeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye ſhall do.

16 And he ſhall be thy ſpokeſman unto the people: and he ſhall be, *even* he ſhall be to thee inſtead of a mouth, and thou ſhalt be to him inſtead of God.

17 And thou ſhalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou ſhalt do ſigns.

18 And Moſes went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and ſaid unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, which *are* in Egypt, and ſee whether they be yet alive. And Jethro ſaid to Moſes, Go in peace.

19 And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes in Midian, Go return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which ſought thy life.

20 And Moſes took his wife, and his ſons, and ſet them upon an aſs, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moſes took the rod of God in his hand.

21 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, When thou goeſt to return into Egypt, ſee *that* thou do all thoſe wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go.

22 And thou ſhalt ſay unto Pharaoh, Thus ſaith the LORD, Iſrael *is* my ſon, *even* my firſt-born.

23 And

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giver of the inexplicable power of articulate ſpeech, and of every degree, by which one man excels another, in that, or in any other gift.

V. 12. *I will be*, &c.] Let us compare this promiſe with the words of Chriſt to his diſciples, "I will give "you a mouth, and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries "ſhall not be able to gainſay, or reſiſt;" (*Luke* xxi. 14, 15;) and then aſk ourſelves, are not both the language of God? Can any one elſe give a mouth and wiſdom?

V. 13. *Send I pray thee*, &c.] 'Send by any one elſe, 'who is more competent; only excuſe me.'

V. 14. *The anger*, &c.] Moſes's unbelief, and reluctancy to engage in this arduous and dangerous ſervice, excited the divine diſpleaſure, which probably appeared by ſome ſenſible token, perhaps by the fire in the buſh becoming more vehement: yet the Lord did not ſuperſede his commiſſion, but in condeſcenſion to his weakneſs of faith aſſigned him an aſſiſtant, who would ſhare the danger, the burden, and the honour. Thus Chriſt ſent out his diſciples by two and two; and ſeveral of them were brethren.—We are not informed, in what ſtation of life Aaron had lived all the former part of his days: but it is not improbable that he had enjoyed many advantages of education, by means of Moſes, and that he had become remarkable for eloquence. Perhaps this might occaſion his being called "Aaron the Levite," as being of ſome eminence, and known to be one of the deſcendants of Levi.—The Lord had revealed himſelf to Aaron at the ſame time that he did to Moſes, and given him commandment to meet him, (27); which concurrence would be a mutual encouragement to them.

V. 15. *With his mouth*, &c.] Though Aaron was eloquent, yet he could not ſpeak to any good purpoſe, without the teaching and aſſiſtance of the Lord.

V. 16. *Inſtead of God*, &c.] Moſes, though the younger brother, was the ſuperior in this commiſſion; the word of God came firſt to him; and he dictated to Aaron what he was to ſpeak, as God put his words into the mouth of his prophets.

V. 18. *Let me go*, &c.] Thus Moſes informed Jethro of his intention, and prepared to depart amicably, as from one who had behaved kindly to him.

V. 19. *All the men*, &c.] This was ſpoken to anſwer the ſecret objection againſt the ſervice, which wrought in the heart of Moſes: and to remove that diſcouragement, which aroſe from his fear of Pharaoh and of the Egyptians, on account of his former conduct.

V. 21. *I will harden his heart.*] God never communicates hardneſs, or wickedneſs, to the heart of man by any poſitive act; "for he cannot be tempted of evil; neither tempteth he any man:" (*Jam.* i. 13.) But, when he is provoked by atrocious crimes, he totally withdraws his reſtraining influences, and gives up a man to his own heart's luſts; he allows Satan alſo liberty to entice, deceive, and blind him; (1 *Kings*, xxii. 20—23;) and he takes off his providential reſtraints, by which many are kept from wickedneſs, becauſe they have not opportunity, or power to commit it, or dare not through fear or ſhame. When a man is thus given up, and let looſe, commands, warnings, judgments, and deliverances, every part of God's revelation in his word, and every diſpenſation of his

23 And I ſay unto thee, Let my ſon go, that he may ſerve me: and if thou refuſe to let him go, behold, I will ſlay thy ſon, *even* thy firſt-born.

24 And it came to paſs by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and ſought to kill him.

25 Then Zipporah took a ſharp ſtone, and cut off the foreſkin of her ſon, and caſt *it* at his feet, and ſaid, Surely a bloody huſband *art* thou to me.

26 So he let him go: then ſhe ſaid, A bloody huſband *thou art*, becauſe of the circumciſion.

27 And the LORD ſaid to Aaron, Go into the wilderneſs to meet Moſes. And he went and met him in the mount of God, and kiſſed him.

28 And Moſes told Aaron all the words of the LORD, who had ſent him, and all the ſigns which he had commanded him.

29 And Moſes and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Iſrael.

30 And Aaron ſpake all the words which the LORD had ſpoken unto Moſes, and did the ſigns in the ſight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had viſited the children of Iſrael, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worſhipped.

CHAP.

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his providence, concur to increaſe obduracy and inſenſibility, pride and preſumption.

V. 22. *My ſon*, &c.] Iſrael was deſpiſed by the Egyptians as a contemptible people, but was honoured of God, being near and dear to him as a child is to his father; and as having the pre-eminence among the nations, which the firſt-born hath among the brethren. By this title Pharaoh might know aſſuredly, that Jehovah would defend, avenge, deliver, and provide for them; and that if he would detain them, he muſt conteſt the matter with the Almighty himſelf. The true Iſrael are all children, and firſt-born; (*Heb.* xii. 23,) and therefore all heirs, and none can bereave them of their inheritance.

V. 23. *Let my ſon go*, &c.] It was not proper that Pharaoh ſhould ſo enſlave the Lord's ſon, as to forbid him from ſerving him. The kings of the earth have a right to civil obedience even from the children of God: but they have no right to enſlave their conſciences, or to prohibit them from ſerving God acccording to them; and they may expect ſevere rebukes if they attempt it.

V. 24. *The Lord met him*, &c.] Either the Lord appeared to Moſes, and threatened him with death; or he inflicted ſickneſs upon him, which he gave him to underſtand was the puniſhment of his ſin, in neglecting to circumciſe his ſon; probably out of regard to Zipporah who oppoſed it.

V. 25. *A ſharp ſtone*, &c.] Knives in ſome countries have been made of ſharp ſtones. This circumſtance may intimate the haſte in which the rite was performed.—Zipporah called Moſes a bloody huſband, becauſe his religion required ſuch a bloody ordinance.—Probably it was at this time, and on occaſion of this reproach of him and of this ſacred inſtitution, that ſhe was ſent back to Jethro for a time.

V. 26. *So he let him go.*] The Lord delivered Moſes from his danger, and allowed him to proſecute his journey. Though ſome interpret it of Moſes ſending Zipporah away, and tranſlate it, "So he let her go."

V. 27. *Met him*, &c.] Moſes had ſo many delays occaſioned by his family concerns; and Aaron made ſo much haſte, that they met almoſt as ſoon as Moſes had ſet out upon his journey, which would be a great encouragement to him. Probably they had not ſeen, or heard of each other for a long time before.

V. 30. *Did the ſigns*, &c.] Moſes gave the people this proof of his divine miſſion, to enſure their concurrence, before he applied to Pharaoh in their behalf.

V. 31. *They bowed*, &c.] Thus the Elders of Iſrael acknowledged Jehovah as the true God, and the God of their fathers, and Moſes as his meſſenger for their deliverance; and they teſtified their gratitude and expectation in an act of ſolemn worſhip.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How indiſpoſed is man to believe the teſtimony of God! Whether he denounce vengeance upon obſtinate offenders; or promiſe acceptance, aſſiſtance, and ſalvation to the returning ſinner, we are ever prone to queſtion his veracity: thus ſome are hardened in preſumption, others ſink into deſpondency, and others are diſcouraged and continue heartleſs in all they attempt, through unbelief.—But the Lord is ſlow to anger, and of great mercy, and deals not with any of us according to the multitude of our ſins: elſe the ſtrongeſt believer upon earth, inſtead of being ſaved by his faith, might be righteouſly condemned for his unbelief.—Whenever we are unwilling to put ourſelves to the trouble or ſelf-denial, or expoſe ourſelves to the reproach or danger of any ſervice; ſelf-love will ſoon ſuggeſt ſome excuſe, which will appear ſufficient to us, however trivial it may be in the judgment of others; and it is no uncommon caſe for thoſe who have raſhly ſet themſelves to work and ſmarted for their folly, to grow timidly negligent of their evident duty: thus do we warp from one extreme to another, and in all are guilty of diſobedience to God. But let unbelief, ſloth, and cowardice ſtart never ſo many objections to our doing our duty in that ſtation

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CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes and Aaron delivering their meſſage unto Pharaoh, with his anſwer to them, v. 1—5. *2d. Pharaoh's commands to the taſk-maſters, Iſrael's diſtreſs and deſponding murmurs againſt Moſes, and his complaint unto the Lord, v.* 6—23.

AND afterward Moſes and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Let my people go, that they may hold a feaſt unto me in the wilderneſs.

2 And Pharaoh ſaid, Who *is* the LORD, that I ſhould obey his voice to let Iſrael go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Iſrael go.

3 And they ſaid, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the deſart, and ſacrifice unto the LORD our God; leſt he fall upon us with peſtilence, or with the ſword.

4 And the king of Egypt ſaid unto them, Wherefore do ye Moſes and Aaron, let the people from their works; get you unto your burdens.

5 And

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of life, to which it hath pleaſed God to call us; the word of God furniſhes us with anſwers to them all; and the aſſurance of his aſſiſtance and protection, ſhould fully ſatisfy our minds in every caſe.—When God gives revelations of new truths, or introduces new diſpenſations, materially differing from all which preceded, he always ſets his ſeal to them, and enables his ſervants to authenticate their miſſion by ſome concluſive ſign: but they, who are employed to enforce the old authenticated revelation, need not ſuch teſtimonials; as both their character and doctrines are to be tried by *that word* of God, to which they appeal.—The miracles, which the Lord enabled his ſervants to work, were not doubtful and equivocal, nor merely effects of power to excite wonder; but were expreſſive of his juſtice and goodneſs, and inſtructive tokens of his favour to his people, and vengeance on his enemies.—God doth not always make it appear that he hath furniſhed men for ſervices, till they are actually called to engage in them: but we may depend on him to qualify us for whatever *he commands us to do.* All knowledge, wiſdom, and utterance, with every good gift, are derived from him: but many endowments are ſuppoſed needful, or uſeful in the more public ſervice of God and his church, which he pours contempt upon, as mere tinſel, worthleſs if not pernicious. Such are all the *ſtudied* and *affected* arts of human oratory: God hath ſeldom made much uſe of them; and Paul would not condeſcend to them, leſt he ſhould be admired inſtead of Chriſt; "and that the faith of the people ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God." (1 *Cor.* ii. 1—5.)—Though the Lord be diſpleaſed with the ſins of his ſervants, who are upright in heart, he yet condeſcends to their infirmities: and in arduous undertakings, it is a great favour to have helpers, who will cordially unite with us, though they ſhould ſhare in, or even eclipſe, our reputation.—Whilſt we cenſure Moſes for ſhrinking from this dangerous ſervice, let us aſk our own hearts, whether we are not neglecting ſuch duties, as are unſpeakably more eaſy, and leſs perilous.—We muſt obey God, rather than man; but in obeying God, we ſhould take care not to give *needleſs* offence to our relatives and friends: yet frequently we muſt be conſtrained to croſs the humours, draw upon ourſelves the reproaches, and forego the comforts of our deareſt relations, if we will act according to the command of God. Even in the path of duty, ſinful omiſſions may draw upon us ſevere rebukes; and neglect of the ſeals and pledges of God's covenant is a ſin of no ſmall aggravation; but implies a contempt and ingratitude, which God will certainly reſent. Yet when ſin is repented of, and the duty attended to, the Lord will return to us in mercy: And the reproaches, which are caſt upon religion and its conſcientious profeſſors, will redound to the laſting diſgrace of thoſe who vented them. None provoke God more, than ſuch, as by terrors or temptations deter, or entice, his children from his ſervice: nor are any more liable to be given up to judicial hardneſs of heart, than cruel tyrants and perſecuting oppreſſors. It frequently happens that leſs difficulty is found, than was expected, in ſuch undertakings as are according to the will of God, and for his glory; and that the hearts of many are inclined to concur, who were not looked for: let us but ariſe, and attempt our proper work, and the Lord will be with us, and proſper us. But if Iſrael welcomed the tidings of temporal deliverance, and worſhipped the Lord; how ſhould we welcome the glad tidings of eternal redemption, embrace it in faith, and adore the Redeemer! And how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Moſes*, &c.] Moſes and Aaron addreſſed Pharaoh by deputation from the elders of Iſrael.—Jacob erected an altar to El-Elohe-Iſrael, to God, the God of Iſrael: (*Gen.* xxxiii. 20.) but that immediately related to himſelf, and the name which God had given him: and this is the firſt time, that Jehovah is called the God of Iſrael, as a nation. Thus he honoured them in their low and deſpiſed eſtate, by calling himſelf their God; for doubtleſs this was done by his command.—Moſes and Aaron demanded that the people ſhould be allowed to go and hold a feaſt to Jehovah their God, in the wilderneſs, that is, a religious feaſt, upon the ſacrifices which they were to offer.—This requiſition was made firſt, that the tyranny of Pharaoh might appear the more evident; as he refuſed the demand, he would certainly have refuſed to let them go entirely.

V. 2. *Who, is the Lord?*] Pharaoh had probably heard

5 And Pharaoh ſaid, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and you make them reſt from their burdens.

6 And Pharaoh commanded the ſame day the taſk-maſters of the people, and their officers, ſaying,

7 Ye ſhall no more give the people ſtraw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather ſtraw for themſelves.

8 And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you ſhall lay upon them; you ſhall not diminiſh *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, ſaying, Let us go *and* ſacrifice to our God.

9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

10 And the taſk-maſters of the people went out, and their officers, and they ſpake to the people, ſaying, Thus ſaith Pharaoh, I will not give you ſtraw.

11 Go ye, get you ſtraw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work ſhall be diminiſhed.

12 So the people were ſcattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather ſtubble inſtead of ſtraw.

13 And the taſk-maſters haſted *them*, ſaying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily taſks, as when there was ſtraw.

14 And the officers of the children of Iſrael, which Pharaoh's taſk-maſters had ſet over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your taſk in making brick, both yeſterday and to-day, as heretofore?

15 Then the officers of the children of Iſrael, came and cried to Pharaoh, ſaying,

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ſome general report of Jehovah, as claiming, by his prophets and ſervants, to be the only living and true God, the creator and governor of the whole earth: but he had long triumphed and tyrannized over his people, and deſpiſed them as abjects and ſlaves; and as *they* ſeemed to have derived ſo little advantage from their God, he concluded that he had as little to fear from him. He therefore treated the whole with the contemptuous indifference of infidelity, ranking Jehovah amongſt, or rather beneath, the gods of the nations, and eſpecially the gods of Egypt. —There is great emphaſis in this word *I*; 'Shall I, who 'am king of Egypt, and lord it over Iſrael, obey the 'God of that deſpicable people? No, I ſcorn to regard 'him.'—Pharaoh had no knowledge, no fear, or love of God, and therefore he refuſed to obey him, and expreſſly ſet him at defiance. Iſrael was a numerous people, they added much to the populouſneſs and wealth of his kingdom, and to his own greatneſs; and it would not conſiſt with either his honour or intereſt, (to ſpeak in the language of politicians,) thus to depopulate his kingdom. He was accuſtomed to tyrannize over Iſrael, and it would look mean upon ſuch a ſummons, to ſet them at liberty: and if he did not intend to ſet them at liberty, he muſt cruſh their firſt attempts, and not allow them to feel their own ſtrength, or to taſte the ſweets of acting according to their own inclinations. Thus his pride, ambition, covetouſneſs, and political wiſdom engaged him in the conteſt; and a point of honour as it is called, that is an obſtinate determination not to have it ſaid that he was worſted, hardened him to perſiſt in it to his deſtruction.

V. 4, 5.] Pharaoh treated the plea of Moſes and Aaron, concerning the commandment of God, with entire neglect, ſuppoſing the whole plan to originate from ſome ambitious intereſted views of their own; and that they abuſed the people's ſuperſtition to promote their ſelfiſh deſigns.—He therefore ordered them to their burdens, as well as the reſt: and we muſt aſcribe it to a divine interpoſition, that he did not ſend them to a dungeon, or to execution; conſidering his character, the offenſive nature of their meſſage, and the boldneſs with which they delivered it.—He alſo repreſented them as doing a public injury to Egypt, and endangering the peace of the community, by taking ſo large a multitude off from their work.

V. 7. *Straw*, &c.] Some ſuppoſe that this ſtraw was cut ſhort, and mingled with the clay in making the bricks; the nature of the clay, and the imperfection of their ſkill requiring it: others ſuppoſe that they burnt the bricks with it.—But in many places ſtraw is now uſed in covering the clay before the bricks are formed, and in covering the bricks before they are burnt, to defend them from the burning ſun or heavy rains; and ſomething of this kind is indiſpenſably neceſſary.

V. 8. *For they be idle*, &c.] Though the fruits of Iſrael's induſtry were many, Pharaoh took it for granted without examining, that the people were not fully employed, or ſuch fancies would not have entered their heads: (and too many of the rich and powerful imitate his example, and act in ſuch matters upon report or conjecture, without enquiry.) To take them off from their conceits, he therefore determined to fill their hands with work, that they might have ſomewhat elſe to think on.

V. 14. *The officers*, &c.] Thus theſe Iſraelites were urged on, in their own defence, to concur in the oppreſſion of their brethren.

Wherefore dealeſt thou thus with thy ſervants?

16 There is no ſtraw given unto thy ſervants, and they ſay to us, Make brick: and behold, thy ſervants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people.

17 But he ſaid, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle: therefore ye ſay, Let us go, *and* do ſacrifice to the LORD.

18 Go therefore now *and* work: for there ſhall no ſtraw be given you, yet ſhall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

19 And the officers of the children of Iſrael did ſee *that* they *were* in evil *caſe*, after it was ſaid, Ye ſhall not miniſh *ought* from your bricks of your daily taſk.

20 And they met Moſes and Aaron, who ſtood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh.

21 And they ſaid unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; becauſe you have made our ſavour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his ſervants, to put a ſword in their hands to ſlay us.

22 And Moſes returned unto the LORD, and ſaid, Lord, wherefore haſt thou *ſo* evil intreated this people? why *is* it *that* thou haſt ſent me?

23 For ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered thy people at all.

CHAP.

V. 20. *Who ſtood*, &c.] Moſes and Aaron were waiting to hear the anſwer which they received, being deeply intereſted in their concerns.

V. 21. *Becauſe*, &c.] Pharaoh blamed Moſes and Aaron for taking the people from their work; the people blamed them for increaſing their burdens: and not only the Egyptians denied, but even Iſrael forgat, that the Lord had ſent them, though they had produced their commiſſion ſigned and ſealed! and they even intimated, that they had done it with a bad intention, and that God himſelf would puniſh them for putting the ſword into Pharaoh's hand to deſtroy them!

V. 22. *Why*, &c?] Thus Moſes himſelf caught the infection, murmured at the Lord for honouring him with this important commiſſion; forgat that God had told him it would be ſo, and almoſt deſpaired of ſucceſs! Lord, what is man at his beſt eſtate!—And yet, if we place ourſelves in his ſituation, and know our own hearts, we may blame, but ſhall not wonder at, his diſtruſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſervants of God are ſometimes called to ſuch employments, as expoſe them to the moſt imminent perils: they may however ſet their faces like a flint; for he who ſends them will bear them out againſt thoſe, who are moſt haughty and imperious, whilſt they obſerve his directions and are faithful to their truſt. The reaſonableneſs of the divine commands will always leave the diſobedient without excuſe: for if we refuſe obedience in thoſe things which are comparatively eaſy, we ſhall never yield it in thoſe inſtances, which require more ſelf-denial: if we refuſe, at his command, to devote a portion of our time and ſubſtance to his ſervice; how ſhall we obey, if he call us to leave all, to take up our croſs, to endure perſecution, and to lay down our lives for his ſake? And yet unleſs we are prepared for this, we cannot be Chriſt's diſciples. But ſinners are afraid of loſing the pleaſure or profit, which they derive or expect from ſin; not knowing that the ſervice of God is perfect freedom, a continual feaſt, and an enduring inheritance. Without that knowledge of God, which is derived from faith and experience, there is no true fear or love of him: and therefore, they who know him not, will habitually diſobey him; and often inſolently deſpiſe him, and preſumptuouſly ſet him at defiance, when his precepts and denunciations interfere with their ambitious and worldly projects.—Nor is this ignorance of God any excuſe; as it ariſes not ſo much from want of inſormation, as from men *not liking* to retain God in their knowledge. (*Rom.* i. 19—28.)—It is common for thoſe, who are themſelves hypocritical or irreligious, to treat all the fears, hopes, conſcientious ſcruples, and experiences of true believers, as ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm; and to cenſure them as vain words and fooliſh fancies. It muſt be allowed that there is much ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm in the world: but on the other hand, true religion muſt be matter of experience; and muſt firſt produce it's effects upon the *heart*, and *conſcience*, before they can appear in the life and converſation. Our buſineſs, therefore, is not to ſanction, or to cenſure all experience together; but to diſtinguiſh betwixt the precious and the vile, according to the ſtandard of the Holy Scriptures. But ſuch perſons are equally diſpoſed to condemn an attention to the ordinances of God as idleneſs, and to conſider all the time or money, which is expended in religion, as waſted to no purpoſe. To this day we find numbers more diſpoſed to blame ſome of their neighbours for ſpending a few hours, ſpared from their worldly buſineſs, in the ſervice of God, crying out, 'Ye are idle, ye are idle;' than to cenſure others, who allot twice the time to diſſipation and intemperance. Thus is the Lord deſpiſed amongſt us, as if nothing could be ſo much miſ-employed, as that which is devoted to him! Nor is it yet an obſolete device of Satan, to fill mens hands with buſineſs, their heads with projects, and their hearts with cares, in order to divert them from the worſhip of God, and from attention to the *one thing* needful.—They, who deſire to be employed and honoured of God in any public

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. Jehovah encouraging Moſes, and aſſuring him of his effectual aſſiſtance, v. 1—8. *2d. Moſes ſpeaking to the Iſraelites, diſregarded by them, complaining to the Lord, and charged to go unto Pharaoh, v.* 9—13. *3d. Some account of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, but eſpecially of the family of Moſes, and Aaron, v.* 14—25. *4th. The hiſtory reſumed, v.* 26—30.

THEN the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Now ſhalt thou ſee what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a ſtrong hand ſhall he let them go, and with a ſtrong hand ſhall he drive them out of the land.

2 And God ſpake unto Moſes, and ſaid unto him, I *am* the LORD:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

4 And I have alſo eſtabliſhed my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were ſtrangers.

5 And I have alſo heard the groaning of the

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public ſphere of uſefulneſs, ſhould count their coſt: and not only expect to meet with oppoſition from the world, but to experience more painful trials from the impatience, infirmities, and even ingratitude and reproaches of the very perſons, whoſe good they are earneſtly ſeeking; and to be accuſed, not only of thoſe crimes of which they are innocent, but by perſons of different characters of things directly contrary to each other.—Even they who *ſeem* to believe, will in time of temptation fall away; and they, who really believe, will, under the preſſure of ſevere trials, ſometimes appear to forget all they knew, and diſtreſs the faithful Miniſter with their diſtruſt, impatience, and peeviſh complaints. But ſuch miniſters, conſcious how they themſelves in like manner often diſhonour, and offend God; whilſt they admire his forbearance and compaſſion to themſelves, will learn to imitate it in bearing with their fretful brethren.—The ſervice of Pharaoh, and his cruel taſk-maſters, was very ſevere; but that of ſin and Satan is much more intolerable. Nay, the law of God, though holy, juſt, and good; yet requiring perfect obedience, without any mention of repentance, forgiveneſs, or aſſiſtance, will only convince the tranſgreſſor, that he is in evil caſe: and whilſt ignorance of the Goſpel and unbelief prevail, his ſins will ſeem to be irritated, rather than ſubdued, by its commanding and convincing power. (*Rom.* vii. 7—13.) Frequently when God is preparing the ſoul for deliverance; the condemnation of the holy law, and the dominion of ſinful paſſions, appear more and more inevitable: the diſquieted ſinner wiſhes he had never heard the convincing word, and is ready to quarrel with the inſtrument, as if he were the cauſe, of his diſtreſs, whilſt Satan would tempt him to deſpair. Yet all this tends to his humiliation, that he may hearken to the Saviour's affectionate invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt." Before it be long his chains ſhall be looſed, and his ſoul ſhall walk at liberty, and enjoy ſweet peace and joy in believing. Yet the moſt faithful ſervants of God, not immediately perceiving the effect of their miniſtry, whilſt they return to ſpread the caſe before God, are apt to diſcourage themſelves, and with impatience complain, that they are ſent to no purpoſe, and that he doth not by them deliver the people at all: but this is their ſin, and their folly, of which in due time they will be aſhamed.—Let us not however cloſe this chapter, without contraſting our mild, and benign government, and the civil and religious liberty which we enjoy, with the cruel tyranny and oppreſſion of Pharaoh: and uniting gratitude to God and man for ſuch bleſſings, let us both pray for their continuance to us and to our poſterity; and for the choiceſt bleſſings upon thoſe, who are the inſtruments of God in them: and let us remember how much we are bound to live under ſuch rulers, in all godlineſs and honeſty, and in quietneſs and conſcientious ſubmiſſion.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Now*, &c.] Moſes had found, to his great diſcouragement, that *his* interference had only rendered the condition of the Iſraelites worſe than before: Pharaoh had ſet the Lord at defiance, and as it were declared war againſt him; and the Iſraelites were ſinking in abject deſpondency. Now matters were come to this criſis, the Lord declared that he would diſplay his power, and effect their deliverance himſelf, that he might have all the glory of it.—When Pharaoh felt the power of God's indignation, he not only conſented to Iſrael's departure; but he, and his people urged and haſtened it. Yet this conſent was extorted by force, and entirely contrary to Pharaoh's inclinations. (xii. 30—39.)

V. 2, 3.] 'I am,' ſaith God, 'that unchangeable 'perfect Being, who am known by the name Jehovah, 'and always act conſiſtently with that name.'—He was known to the Patriarchs as God Almighty, or the all-ſufficient God, who poſſeſſes all wiſdom, power, and dominion to contrive and effect the purpoſes of his love.—But by his name JEHOVAH was he not known to them. It is moſt probable, that this ſhould be read with an interrogation;—"Was I not known?" For Moſes conſtantly uſed the name Jehovah in the preceding hiſtory: the Patriarchs built their altars and called upon the name of Jehovah: Abraham called the place, where he was about to ſacrifice Iſaac, *Jehovah Jireh*. (*Gen.* xxii. 14.) And God ſpeaking to Jacob in Bethel, ſaith, "I am "Jehovah,

the children of Iſrael, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage: and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore ſay unto the children of Iſrael, I *am* the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage: and I will redeem you with a ſtretched-out arm, and with great judgments.

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did ſwear to give it, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob: and I will give it you for an heritage: I *am* the LORD.

9 And Moſes ſpake ſo unto the children of Iſrael: but they hearkened not unto Moſes, for anguiſh of ſpirit, and for cruel bondage.

10 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

11 Go in, ſpeak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Iſrael go out of his land.

12 And Moſes ſpake before the LORD, ſaying, Behold, the children of Iſrael have not hearkened unto me; how then ſhall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumciſed lips?

13 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Iſrael, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; to bring the children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt.

14 Theſe *be* the heads of their fathers' houſes: The ſons of Reuben the firſt-born of Iſrael;

"Jehovah, the God of Abraham." (*Gen.* xxviii. 13.) The intention of theſe words ſeems to have been this: Moſes was diſcouraged, becauſe the difficulties before him ſeemed inſurmountable: but this was unreaſonable; the ſame glorious God, who revealed himſelf to Abraham, as *Almighty*, for whom nothing is too hard, revealed himſelf alſo as Jehovah; which is expreſſive of his ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, and immutability. No difficulty therefore could have ariſen, but what he foreſaw when he made the promiſes; nor any, which his power was not at all times able to remove. As if he had ſaid, 'Remember, Moſes, who it was that made the promiſes to 'the fathers, and aſſure thyſelf he is well able to fulfil 'them.'—Thus Jeſus, who is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever, ſaid to Martha over the grave of Lazarus, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, "thou ſhouldeſt ſee the Glory of God?" referring to what he ſaid before, "I am the Reſurrection and the "Life." (*John* xi. 25—40.)—But ſome think, that though the Patriarchs knew the name Jehovah, they were not inſtructed in this meaning and application of it; and that this is the purport of the paſſage.

V. 4. *I have*, &c.] The Lord, having reminded Moſes of his unchangeable perfection, called to his remembrance the relations in which he ſtood to Iſrael, and the covenant engagements under which he had voluntarily brought himſelf; by which he had pledged the honour of his name for the accompliſhment of his promiſes.

V. 5. *And I*, &c.] As the juſt and compaſſionate patron and avenger of the oppreſſed, as well as in remembrance of his covenant, the Lord declared himſelf concerned to puniſh the Egyptians, and to reſcue Iſrael.

V. 6. *I will redeem*, &c.] On all thoſe accounts which had been mentioned, the Lord's determination was abſolute, and he would exert his whole power to accompliſh it: as a man ſtretches forth his arm, and employs his whole force to effect any thing about which he is in earneſt.

V. 7. *I will take you to me*, &c.] God engaged to take the nation of Iſrael under his eſpecial care and protection, and to maintain his truth and worſhip among them; whilſt other nations were ſuffered to walk in their own ways: which was a ſhadow of the ſpiritual relation, that ſubſiſts betwixt him and true believers.—Thus they would know him as the Lord their God.—This expreſſion is commonly uſed to denote that knowledge of the being, perfection, power, juſtice, goodneſs, or faithfulneſs of God, which is the effect of *experience*; whether of his mercy and love, or of his righteous vengeance. Iſrael would learn to know that he was the Lord, in the experience of his powerful and faithful loving kindneſs; and might thus diſcover that he was juſtly entitled to all that love and ſervice, which his law required.

V. 9. *For anguiſh*, &c.] Perceiving no ſenſible tokens of approaching deliverance, but an increaſe of their burdens; the Iſraelites in unbelief and deſpondency, diſregarded the meſſage, and refuſed to make any further attempts.

V. 12. *Behold*, &c.] The faith of Moſes was ſo far enfeebled, that he could ſcarcely be kept to his work; for *prompt obedience* always bears an exact proportion to the ſtrength of our faith.—He had already forgotten that the Lord had engaged to deliver the people by a ſtrong hand, and not by perſuaſive words: ſo that his *uncircumciſed lips* could be no real hindrance to his ſucceſs. This expreſſion is uſed in Scripture for every kind of unſuitableneſs, in any thing to anſwer its proper purpoſe: as the carnal heart, and depraved nature of fallen man are entirely unſuited to the ſervice of God, and the purpoſes of his glory.

V. 14.

Iſrael; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: theſe *be* the families of Reuben.

15 And the ſons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the ſon of a Canaanitiſh woman: theſe *are* the families of Simeon.

16 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Levi, according to their generations: Gerſhon, and Kohath, and Merari: And the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred and thirty and ſeven years.

17 The ſons of Gerſhon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.

18 And the ſons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: And the years of the life of Kohath *were* an hundred thirty and three years.

19 And the ſons of Merari; Mahali, and Muſhi: theſe *are* the families of Levi, according to their generations.

20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's ſiſter to wife; and ſhe bare him Aaron and Moſes: And the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and ſeven years.

21 And the ſons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.

22 And the ſons of Uzziel; Miſhael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.

23 And Aaron took him Eliſheba, daughter of Aminadab, ſiſter of Naaſhon, to wife; and ſhe bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 And the ſons of Korah; Aſſir, and Elkanah, and Abiaſaph: theſe *are* the families of the Korhites.

25 And Eleazar Aaron's ſon took him *one* of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and ſhe bare him Phinehas: theſe *are* the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families.

26 Theſe *are* that Aaron and Moſes, to whom the LORD ſaid, Bring out the children of Iſrael from the land of Egypt according to their armies.

27 Theſe *are* they which ſpake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Iſrael from Egypt: theſe *are* that Moſes and Aaron.

28 And it came to paſs on the day *when* the LORD ſpake unto Moſes in the land of Egypt,

29 That the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, I *am* the LORD: ſpeak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I ſay unto thee.

30 And Moſes ſaid before the Lord, Behold, I *am* of uncircumciſed lips, and how ſhall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

CHAP.

V. 13. *Gave them*, &c.] The Lord abſolutely commanded Moſes and Aaron, without further objections or delays, to proceed with his work; and not only to attempt bringing Iſrael out of Egypt, but abſolutely to effect it: this would tend to increaſe their faith, and raiſe their expectations.

V. 14. *Theſe be the heads*, &c.] Before the hiſtorian proceeded to relate the performance of this charge, he brake off, to give ſome account of the perſons to whom it was given.—Reuben was the firſt born, and accordingly is firſt mentioned, to mark the accompliſhment of Jacob's prediction: ſeeing he was paſſed by, and the deliverer ſprang not from him.—For the ſame reaſon Simeon ſeems alſo to be mentioned, who was the next in ſeniority: —But the deliverer of Iſrael was not ſprung from him, but from Levi, the third ſon, who though he had been diſgraced, began already to be dignified.

V. 20. *His father's ſiſter.*] The law ſoon after condemned ſuch marriages as inceſtuous: (*Lev.* xviii. 13. *Numb.* xxxvi. 59:) but Moſes with perfect impartiality left it upon record, that both he and Aaron were the offſpring of ſuch an union. The Septuagint makes Jochebed only the couſin to Amram, probably from regard to the honour of Moſes and Aaron.—Moſes lived only to the age of 120, which was yet conſidered extraordinary, though his immediate progenitor had lived much longer: for he fixed the ordinary extent of man's life in his time at 70, or 80 years. (*Pſalm* xc.) Thus the age of man was gradually rendered ſhorter, until it was reduced to its preſent limits.

V. 23. *Eliſheba*, &c.] This is the ſame as Elizabeth. She was the ſiſter of Naaſhon, who was of the tribe of Judah, and an anceſtor of Chriſt.—Thus an alliance was immediately formed betwixt the family of the prieſts and that of the kings; which might ſhadow forth him, who was both prieſt and king in one perſon.

V. 26. *Their armies*, &c.] When the tribes of Iſrael were afterwards regularly encamped, they appeared as ſo many armies prepared for war.

V. 30. *And Moſes ſaid*, &c.] Having ſhewn who this Moſes and Aaron were, and manifeſted that they were of the houſe of Iſrael, and of the tribe of Levi, the ſacred writer returned to his hiſtory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are moſt likely to proſper in our attempts to glorify God and ſerve our generation, when we are convinced

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes and Aaron encouraged of God, and going unto Pharaoh, and the rod of Moſes becoming a ſerpent before him and his ſervants, v. 1—10. *2d. The miracle imitated by the magicians, and Pharaoh's heart hardened, v.* 11—13. *3d. Moſes again ſent unto Pharaoh, and threatening that the waters ſhould be turned into blood; the execution of the threatening, and the diſtreſs of the Egyptians, v.* 14—25.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother ſhall be thy prophet.

2 Thou ſhalt ſpeak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother ſhall ſpeak unto Pharaoh, that he ſend the children of Iſrael out of his land.

3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my ſigns and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

4 But Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, *and* my people the children of Iſrael, out of the land of Egypt, by great judgments.

5 And the Egyptians ſhall know, that I *am*

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vinced by experience, that we can do nothing of ourſelves, and are habitually ſenſible that all our ſucceſs muſt be from God: for when we can truly ſay, that our whole dependence is placed on him, and our only expectation from him, we ſhall not intercept his revenue of glory, but ſhall be prepared to mark and to record his works of power and love. He will therefore previouſly prove and humble thoſe, whom he loves and employs, and bring them to *feel*, as well as acknowledge, their inſufficiency: but whilſt he is thus mortifying their pride and ambition, Satan will take advantage of their unpleaſant ſituation, to tempt them to diſcontent, impatience, and diſcouragement, that their hands may hang down and their knees wax feeble; that they may be unfit for, and reluctant to, the work aſſigned them. But though their unbelief be diſhonourable and diſpleaſing to God; yet he will pity them and remove the diſcouragements under which they labour. Nor is any thing more effectual for this purpoſe, than diſcovering to them his immutable perfection, his incomprehenſible wiſdom and power, his uncontroulable dominion, his condeſcending compaſſion, love, and faithfulneſs; and his oath and covenant, whereby he hath engaged to fulfil his largeſt promiſes to his church, and to every living member of it.—Calling theſe things to remembrance, and recollecting his wonders of old, the drooping heart revives, faith recovers ſtrength, and larger expectations are formed. Thus being ſtrengthened, the ſervant of God riſes ſuperior to his deſpondency, patiently continues in well-doing, is animated to attend to preſent duty, and proceeds in the work given him to perform.

Our compaſſionate Lord regards our groanings under temporal calamities: but when the guilt and power of ſin and temptation become our chief complaint, and extort the exclamation, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who "ſhall deliver me?" He particularly notes it, and will certainly perform to us, "the oath, which he ſware "unto Abraham—That we being delivered from the "hand of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in "holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of "our life." (*Luke* i. 73—75.) When we find, that we cannot deliver ourſelves, he will ſhew us what he can do, and redeeming us by his ſtrong hand and ſtretched-out arm from the power of our enemies; he will take us to be his people, and will be our God; he will guard us ſafely all the way to that good land, where tears, groans, ſins, and enemies are known no more for ever; and there he will give us everlaſting felicity.

But even ſuch glorious and joyful aſſurances as theſe afford no conſolation to the ſoul which is overwhelmed with preſent trouble, finds matters grow worſe and worſe, and has no ſenſible tokens of the Lord's favour.—For there is a ſtrong propenſity in our nature to expect the continuance and increaſe of ſuch diſpenſations, as we at preſent experience, whether joyful or afflictive: and even univerſal obſervation and experience, of the mutability of human affairs, do not prevent thoſe in proſperity from expecting greater proſperity, and thoſe in adverſity from expecting deeper ſcenes of affliction.—This diſplays much of Satan's management, who takes the advantage to buoy up ſome men in careleſs preſumption, and to depreſs others in heartleſs deſpondency. Faith is the only effectual remedy of theſe evils, nor can we walk comfortably in ſuch a world as this, "except we walk by faith, not by ſight." He, and he only, who habitually believes the teſtimony, and relies on the faithful promiſe of God, will find his heart prepared for humble watchfulneſs, and patient hope, to do the will of God, and to ſubmit to his appointments with chearfulneſs and compoſure.—Such a perſon will carefully watch againſt thoſe ſins, into which he hath been heretofore betrayed; and will often reflect upon his own meanneſs, and unworthineſs of the comforts which he enjoys; which will ſilence his complaints, kindle his gratitude, and quicken his diligence in the ſervice to which he is called.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *A god*, &c.] Moſes as the ambaſſador of Jehovah, repreſenting him and ſpeaking in his name, poſſeſſed and exerciſed an authority over Pharaoh, and laid injunctions, denounced threatenings, and called for judgments upon him, with a power, which Pharaoh, proud and great and he was, could not reſiſt, and was unable to deſpiſe or to endure. Moſes had therefore a decided ſuperiority, and ſtood not in awe of his authority, but made him tremble before him: All which ſeems to be implied in this ſtrong expreſſion; "Thou ſhalt be a god to Pharaoh." (See *John* x. 35, 36. *Ex.* iv. 15.)

V. 5. *Shall*

am the LORD, when I ſtretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Iſrael from among them.

6 And Moſes and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, ſo did they.

7 And Moſes *was* fourſcore years old, and Aaron fourſcore and three years old, when they ſpake unto Pharaoh.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, ſaying,

9 When Pharaoh ſhall ſpeak unto you, ſaying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou ſhalt ſay unto Aaron, Take thy rod and caſt *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it ſhall become a ſerpent.

10 And Moſes and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did ſo as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron caſt down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his ſervants, and *it* became a ſerpent.

11 Then Pharaoh alſo called the wiſe-men, and the ſorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they alſo did in like manner with their inchantments.

12 For they caſt down every man his rod, and they became ſerpents: but Aaron's rod ſwallowed up their rods.

13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had ſaid.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh's

V. 5. *Shall know*, &c.] The Egyptians had, in their puniſhment, a full demonſtration that the God of Iſrael was the great Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth. (Note vi. 7.)

V. 6. *And Moſes*, &c.] At length Moſes was delivered from his fears, makes no more objections, but being ſtrengthened in faith, went about his arduous work with undaunted courage, and proceeded in it with indefatigable perſeverance.

V. 9. *Shew a miracle*, &c.] It is here ſuppoſed, that extraordinary divine commiſſions ſhould be atteſted by miracles: yet it will hereafter appear, that in ſome caſes theſe alone are not ſufficient to prove a doctrine divine; and that they may be counterfeited by Satan and his inſtruments. (*Deut.* xiii. 1—3. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9.) Yet, except when they are brought in proof of ſuch doctrines, as contradict the firſt principles of religion in general, or of revealed truth in particular, they may be conſidered as the ſeal of Heaven affixed to the prophet's commiſſion, and open, undeniable, and repeated miracles are to be received as a divine atteſtation in behalf of the perſon, by whom they are wrought. (*John* v. 36. vi. 27. x. 38.) Nor can we ſuppoſe that God will allow this his ſeal to be ſo counterfeited, as to impoſe upon the attentive, humble, and impartial enquirer; however he may leave the proud and prejudiced to be deceived by deluſive appearances.—The command given to Aaron implied a prediction of the miracle, which helped to render it more undeniable: though the firſt miracle was not a plague, yet it was of a very menacing nature.

V. 12. *They*, &c.] Many ſuppoſe that this was a mere illuſion upon the ſenſes of the ſpectators, either by the artifice of the magicians, or the power of Satan; but it ſeems, from the language here uſed, to have been a *real change:* and the queſtion in that caſe is, how, or by whom was it produced? We cannot ſuppoſe, that either the magicians or Satan could produce this transformation, or that it could be effected in any other way, than by the creative power of God.—Let it be remembered that Pharaoh called for the magicians to confront the miracle, which Moſes wrought for his conviction; becauſe he would not be convinced of that, which was ſo contrary to his ſuppoſed intereſt, honour, and inclinations; and becauſe he wanted ſome cavil to excuſe and cloke his haughty diſobedience. It can ſcarcely be denied by any one, who reverences the language of Scripture, that the magicians were at ſome times aſſiſted by ſatanical influence, and that effects produced by them were beyond human power and ſagacity: nor could they know, but by experiment, the limits of this communicated power, which probably they aſcribed to ſome of their idols. On the other hand it was the deſign of God to harden the heart of this proud rebel: whilſt therefore the magicians were exerciſing *their art*, he might interpoſe *his power*, and the production of the ſerpents, *apparently* by magic, would furniſh Pharaoh with the very objection which he wanted: and if it were righteous in God to give up Pharaoh to final obduracy, it could not be unrighteous in him to employ this method of effecting it. (1 *Kings*, xxii. 19—23. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9—12. 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 11—16.) In ſhort, he, 'who hates the truth, ſhall be the dupe of lies:' and it was perfectly conſiſtent with the divine perfection to furniſh an obſtinate infidel with the very objections for which he wiſhed and ſought. The event, when Aaron's rod ſwallowed up their rods, would have ſatisfied an impartial mind, on which ſide the truth lay; and, had not a previous bias lain upon Pharaoh's mind, would have more than counterbalanced the change of the magicians' rods into ſerpents.

V. 13. *And he*, &c.] It is not neceſſary to underſtand this of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart; as it merely expreſſes its becoming hard, without determining the author of that hardneſs: but however that be, his heart became hard, not by obduracy created in it, but in conſequence of the deluſion of the magicians, which ſerved him for a pretext. He would now ſay, that the magicians had produced ſerpents alſo; and that Moſes and Aaron were only greater adepts in magic; that Jehovah had nothing to do in it, and that there was no occaſion to liberate the Iſraelites. The Lord knowing the ſtate of Pharaoh's mind, and the effect which this circumſtance would have upon it, in ſo appointing it, may be ſaid to have hardened his heart.

V. 15. *He goeth*, &c.] Some ſuppoſe that Pharaoh went

raoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuſeth to let the people go.

15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou ſhalt ſtand by the river's brink, againſt he come: and the rod which was turned to a ſerpent ſhalt thou take in thine hand.

16 And thou ſhalt ſay unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath ſent me unto thee, ſaying, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me in the wilderneſs: and behold, hitherto thou wouldeſt not hear.

17 Thus ſaith the LORD, in this thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD: behold, I will ſmite with the rod that *is* in mine hand, upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they ſhall be turned to blood.

18 And the fiſh that *is* in the river ſhall die, and the river ſhall ſtink; and the Egyptians ſhall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

19 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and ſtretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their ſtreams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood: and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *veſſels of* wood, and in *veſſels of* ſtone.

20 And Moſes and Aaron did ſo, as the LORD commanded: and he lifted up the rod and ſmote the waters that *were* in the river, in the ſight of Pharaoh, and in the ſight of his ſervants: and all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood.

21 And the fiſh that *was* in the river died: and the river ſtank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22 And the magicians of Egypt did ſo with their inchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had ſaid.

23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his houſe, neither did he ſet his heart to this alſo.

24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink: for they could not drink of the water of the river.

25 And ſeven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had ſmitten the river.

CHAP.

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went in the morning to perform his devotions to the river, or it's ſuppoſed tutelar deity.—Moſes was directed to take in his hand the rod which had been turned into a ſerpent; to remind Pharaoh of that preceding miracle, and to be a token of the Lord's power to inflict the judgment he was about to denounce.

V. 21. *There*, &c.] The very ſight of ſuch immenſe quantities of entire blood muſt have been very horrible; the effects of ſuch a change diſtreſſing and calamitous beyond expreſſion. The Egyptians gloried in, and even idolized, the river Nile, by whoſe inundations the whole country was enriched: but now it, and all the waters derived from it, were become their terror. They had cruelly caſt the children of the Iſraelites into the river; and now the river itſelf was turned into blood. (*Rev.* xvi. 4—7.) A great part of the proviſion of Egypt conſiſted of fiſh; but now it was all deſtroyed, their waters were all uſeleſs or noxious; terrible conſequences might be apprehended from its continuance; and this plague horribly foreboded all the deſolations which followed by the other judgments. The firſt miracle of Chriſt turned water into wine, the firſt plague upon Egypt turned all their water into blood: For the love of Chriſt to his diſciples changes common mercies into ſpecial bleſſings; but the anger of God towards his enemies renders their moſt valued, or needed advantages, a curſe and miſery to them.

V. 22. *And the*, &c.] The magicians ſhould have attempted to remove the terrible judgment, and to remedy or prevent its fatal conſequences, if they would have made a fair trial of the efficacy of their art, in oppoſition to the miracles wrought by Moſes: but they only amuſed Pharaoh, and increaſed the diſtreſs of Egypt, either in reality or appearance, by imitating, or rather aping, the ſurpriſing miracle of Moſes; and, by pretending at leaſt, to turn into blood ſome of the *little* water, which the mercy of God had ſpared them. Yet this ſufficed to harden Pharaoh's heart, and prevent him from acknowledging the hand of God even in this awful judgment; which probably he attributed to the ſuperior ſkill in magic, which Moſes and Aaron had acquired.

V. 23. *Turned*, &c.] Pharaoh, being full of indignation againſt Moſes, and bidding defiance to God, both diſregarded the preſent diſtreſs of his ſubjects, and was careleſs about the future conſequences of his obſtinate diſobedience.

V. 25. *Seven days*, &c.] Thus long the awful calamity continued, and was then removed; for the Lord would give reſpite to Egypt and to Pharaoh, and make way for other plagues; that his own power and juſtice, and the obſtinacy of Pharaoh and his ſervants might be the more diſplayed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord hath humbled and proved his ſervants, and fitted them for their work, he will put honour upon them: and the leaſt of thoſe, who are entruſted with his meſſage, and employed to ſpeak in his name, are

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The plague of the frogs *denounced and ſent; imitated by the magicians, and removed at the requeſt of Pharaoh, who notwithſtanding hardened his heart, v.* 15. *2d. The plague of the* lice *which baffled the magicians; and yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, v.* 16—19. *3d. The plague of the* flies; *Pharaoh relenting, the plague removed, and his heart hardened, v.* 20—32.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Go unto Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

2 And if thou refuſe to let *them* go, behold, I will ſmite all thy borders with frogs.

3 And the river ſhall bring forth frogs abundantly, which ſhall go up and come into thine houſe, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the houſe of thy ſervants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs.

4 And the frogs ſhall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy ſervants.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the ſtreams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cauſe frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6 And Aaron ſtretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

7 And

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are in this delegated character, and whilſt faithfully executing their office, ſuperior to the greateſt and haughtieſt of thoſe to whom they are ſent; and ought to ſpeak with firmneſs and authority, without fear of them, reſpect of their perſons, or deſire of pleaſing them, whilſt they are living in diſobedience to God. And in this ſpirit the priſoner Paul may expect to make even Felix tremble. But to deliver the meſſage of God to proud perſecuting tyrants, requires ſuch ſtrength of faith, ſuch intrepid courage, and ſuch meekneſs of wiſdom, as very few are endued with: and we have cauſe to be not only ſatisfied, but thankful, that we are not called to that ſervice.—Joſeph ſtood before Pharaoh to be ruler over all the land of Egypt, at the age of 30; but Moſes and Aaron were above 80, when they demanded Iſrael's deliverance; for the gravity, wiſdom, and experience of old age were peculiarly requiſite to give them due authority: yet ſuch perſons as intrude not themſelves, but are really called to any arduous undertaking, need but implicitly believe, and obey the Lord; and he will certainly bear them out.—They, who refuſe to attend to the word of the Lord, and to acquaint themſelves with him as a God of grace and love for their ſalvation, will feel the effects of his wrath, and become acquainted with him as a God of righteous vengeance to their deſtruction. In one way or other, all men ſhall know his holy majeſty and power: and whether they ſubmit to him or perſiſt in their rebellion, he will glorify himſelf in and by them. How careful then ſhould we be not to provoke him to give us up to hardneſs and impenitency! If we would eſcape that awful judgment, we muſt not continue in the practice of preſumptuous ſins, nor procraſtinate in the great concerns of ſalvation: we muſt watch againſt careleſſneſs under affliction, and inſolence in proſperity; we muſt not turn away our ear from inſtruction and reproof, nor ſtifle convictions of conſcience by diſſipation, buſineſs, company, or ruſhing into ſin; or by hating, and ſhuning the awakening light of divine truth: for theſe are ſome of the ſteps by which men proceed to the brink of that awful precipice.—What men diſlike, as militating againſt their pride and luſts, they will not by any evidence be convinced of; but the leaſt ſhadow of an argument, though counterbalanced by demonſtration itſelf, will produce their belief of thoſe things, which they wiſh to be true. Thus all *mental errors* in religion originate in ſome degree from the ſtate of our heart, and the contrariety of revealed truths to our prejudices, intereſts, or inclinations; "*becauſe* I tell you the truth, ye believe "me not." (*John* viii. 45.) God always accompanies his word with ſufficient evidence of it's divine authority, were we ſuitably diſpoſed to attend to and entertain it: but when men are bent upon diſobedience, and inclined to cavil and object; he often permits a ſnare to be laid, in which they are entangled: nor are any more inſtrumental in the deſtruction of ſinners, than ſuch as reſiſt the truth, in the ſame manner as the magicians withſtood Moſes; namely, by amuſing men with a reſemblance and a counterfeit of it; for Satan himſelf is moſt to be dreaded, when he is transformed into an angel of light, (2 *Tim.* iii. 8.) But madneſs is in the heart of man, or he would never dare to provoke that God, who can ſo eaſily turn our choiceſt comforts into the moſt dreadful plagues; and may ſo righteouſly render thoſe things, which have been the fuel of our pride or the inſtruments of our cruelty, the weapons of his indignation: and all the aſſiſtance of man cannot remove, and may probably add to our diſtreſs. Nor do men generally underſtand the worth of common mercies, till they are deprived of them.—In the myſtery of God's providence ſubjects often ſuffer *through* the crimes of their princes; yet *for* their own ſins, which provoke God to ſend them ſuch rulers in wrath: and they for their own profit will join them in iniquity, and are joined with them in the puniſhment. Yet doth the righteous Lord ſo delight in mercy, that he proceeds by ſlow degrees to extremities with the moſt atrocious offenders: but if neither judgments nor mercies do bring men to repentance, deſtruction will at length overtake them without remedy.

7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee, and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only?

10 And he said, To-morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know, that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God.

11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses: and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

14 And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice, in man and in beast: all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 6. *Aaron stretched out*, &c.] Thus Moses gave the word of command, and Aaron bare the rod which was the token of the divine presence and operation; and at Moses's word he gave the signal of the miracle being performed.

V. 8. *Intreat*, &c.] Though the magicians succeeded in their attempt to imitate this miracle also; yet Pharaoh felt that the power of God was employed against him: and notwithstanding his haughtiness and impiety, he was constrained to tremble before him, and to pay such respect unto Moses, and Aaron, as to beg of them to intreat the Lord for him.—Under the anguish of this most humiliating, and disgusting judgment, he was inclined to dismiss Israel; but it was an extorted, reluctant willingness, and therefore not durable. (vii. 1.)

V. 9. *Glory over me*, &c.] This expression seems to mean, that Moses was willing, as we say, to be Pharaoh's humble servant in the business; he would do any thing for him which he could desire, and allow him to fix his own time; so glad would he be to see him submit, and escape destruction, by letting Israel go.—By thus leaving Pharaoh to fix the time when the frogs should depart, it became the more undeniable, that Jehovah both sent and removed the judgment; and this would deprive him of all pretences to ascribe it to other causes.

V. 10. *To-morrow*, &c.] We are naturally induced on this occasion to enquire, why Pharaoh did not choose to be delivered from the frogs immediately? To this it may be answered, because he still indulged unbelief, and harboured expectations that they would go away of themselves; and then he should get rid of them without being obliged to Moses, or to Jehovah; and without the necessity of liberating Israel. The plague was so terrible, that he could scarcely endure it: yet he would bear up, as well as he could, one day longer in this expectation.

V. 14. *They gathered*, &c.] It thus appeared that they were real frogs, which God in judgment had first created, and then in mercy destroyed.

V. 15. *Saw that*, &c.] Pharaoh could have no pretence to question either the power of Jehovah, or the divine mission of Moses: whilst the plague pressed upon him, he was inclined to submit, for it was insupportable: but when it was removed, he mistook, as many do, a *respite* for a deliverance; motives of ambition, pride, and interest, began again to influence his mind; and thus he was induced to break his promise, and persist in disobedience. Having engaged in the contest, the further he proceeded the more he was infatuated; that, which at first appeared a loss and weakening of his kingdom, was considered as an insufferable degradation of his dignity; and he considered himself engaged in honour not to be thus threatened and forced into submission. This being evidently the state of his mind, both judgments and mercies tended to increase his obduracy.

V. 16. *Lice*, &c.] Had the Lord sent lions and tygers in large droves, to devour the Egyptians; or armies of victorious enemies to desolate the land, Pharaoh, though crushed, would have appeared in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others, of some consequence: but it was inconceivably humiliating, and rendered him extremely contemptible, to be thus vanquished by such insignificant and despicable creatures, whom yet he could neither escape nor oppose.

18 And

18 And the magicians did ſo with their inchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: ſo, there were lice upon man, and upon beaſt.

19 Then the magicians ſaid unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had ſaid.

20 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Riſe up early in the morning, and ſtand before Pharaoh, (lo, he cometh forth to the water) and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

21 Elſe if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will ſend ſwarms *of flies* upon thee, and upon thy ſervants, and upon thy people, and into thy houſes: and the houſes of the Egyptians ſhall be full of ſwarms *of flies*, and alſo the ground whereon they *are*.

22 And I will ſever in that day the land of Goſhen, in which my people dwell, that no ſwarms *of flies* ſhall be there; to the end thou mayeſt know, that I *am* the LORD in the midſt of the earth.

23 And I will put a diviſion between my people, and thy people: to-morrow ſhall this ſign be.

24 And the LORD did ſo: and there came a grievous ſwarm *of flies* into the houſe of Pharaoh, and *into* his ſervants' houſes, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reaſon of the ſwarm *of flies*.

25 And Pharaoh called for Moſes, and for Aaron, and ſaid, Go ye, ſacrifice to your God in the land.

26 And Moſes ſaid, It is not meet ſo to do; for we ſhall ſacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, ſhall we ſacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not ſtone us?

27 We will go three days journey into the wilderneſs, and ſacrifice to the LORD our God, as he ſhall command us.

28 And Pharaoh ſaid, I will let you go, that ye may ſacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderneſs; only you ſhall not go very far away: intreat for me.

29 And Moſes ſaid, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD, that the ſwarms *of flies* may depart from Pharaoh, from his ſervants, and from his people, to-morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully anymore, in not letting the people go to ſacrifice to the LORD.

30 And Moſes went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moſes; and he removed the ſwarms *of*

V. 18. *But they could not*, &c.] The Lord allowed the magicians to proceed, (or perhaps, without their knowledge, produced himſelf thoſe effects which they aſcribed to their inchantments,) till his righteous purpoſes were anſwered; and then they could do nothing; to convince them, that they had no power againſt Moſes, but what was given them from above. (*John* xix. 11.) Some ſuppoſe from the concluding part of the verſe that they attempted alſo to remove the plague, but could not.

V. 19. *This is*, &c.] The magicians, in order to vindicate their art, and their own ſkill in it, were driven to confeſs, that they were baffled only by the interpoſition of God. Yet this declaration produced no effect on the mind of Pharaoh: for it is far more eaſy to lead men into error and ſin, than to recover them to truth and obedience. Probably he ſtill *endeavoured to believe*, that Moſes was only a magician of ſuperior attainments.

V. 22. *I will ſever*, &c.] Perhaps the Iſraelites for their correction had in ſome meaſure had a ſhare in the former plagues, which would help to harden Pharaoh's heart: but it was at this time foretold, that they ſhould be totally exempted, that both they and the Egyptians might perceive the difference.

V. 24. *The land was* corrupted, *&c.*] When we conſider that all flies propagate by a maggot, of one kind or other, we ſhall perceive the emphaſis of this expreſſion, and the loathſomeneſs of this plague; for the land would not only be filled and deſolated by the flies themſelves, but deformed with ſtench and filthineſs by their maggots: for we muſt ſuppoſe theſe flies to have been in a ſtate of maturity; however they were produced.

V. 25. *In the land*, &c.] Pharaoh was aware, that if the Iſraelites departed into the wilderneſs to offer ſacrifice, they would not readily be brought back again; but he intimated, that if they only meant to ſacrifice to Jehovah, they might do it in the land, and he would make no further oppoſition.

V. 26. *The abomination*, &c.] That is, the objects of their abominable worſhip, namely, the calves or oxen, which the Egyptians adored as deities, and for ſacrificing of which, the Iſraelites alſo would be had in abomination. (1 *Kings* xi. 5—7. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 13.)

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of flies from Pharaoh, from his ſervants, and from his people: there remained not one.

32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time alſo, neither would he let the people go.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The plague of murrain upon the cattle of Egypt predicted and ſent; with the exemption of thoſe of Iſrael, v. 1—7. 2d. The plague of boils, v. 8—12. 3d. Moſes expoſtulating with Pharaoh, and predicting the plague of hail: the threatening fulfilled, and the devaſtation it made, v. 13—26. 4th. Pharaoh confeſſing his wickedneſs, deprecating further judgments, and promiſing to let Iſrael go, v. 27, 28. 5th. Moſes replying, and interceding for the removal of the hail, and Pharaoh after all continuing hardened and rebellious, v. 29—35.

THEN the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus ſaith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

2 For if thou refuſe to let *them* go, and wilt hold them ſtill,

3 Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horſes, upon the aſſes, upon the camels, upon the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How dangerous is it to provoke that God, who hath ſo many arrows in his quiver; who can employ the moſt deſpicable of his creatures as formidable executioners of his vengeance; and who can ſo readily turn all our pleaſures into loathing, all our comelineſs and decorations into deformity and corruption, and pour contempt on all our pride and ſelf-importance! Nor is there any reſiſtance, or eſcape from his tremendous indignation, whatever meſſengers he employs to convey it. Yet he ſtill continues merciful; he is ready to forgive every ſinner who ſubmits, and only purſues with vengeance ſuch as perſiſt in their rebellion. But let us not miſtake tranſient relentings, or haſty determinations of amendment, for that unreſerved ſubmiſſion which the word of God requires. Under the weight of incumbent affliction, and the dreadful expectation of ſtill heavier ſufferings, the proudeſt and hardeſt heart will feel ſome pangs of remorſe; the deſpiſed and hated ſervants of the Lord will then perhaps be called for; their prayers will be deſired, and amendment promiſed: but alas! ſuch appearances are entitled to ſmall regard, as little dependence can be placed upon them. Even Satan once beſought Chriſt not to torment him; and experience ſhews, that frequently ſuch intreaties and reſolutions ſpring from no higher principle than fear of torment. For when there is reſpite, ſuch men again harden their hearts, throw off their aſſumed and conſtrained ſhews of piety, return to their ſins, and commonly proceed to more ungodlineſs. But though we may not countenance the deluſion of men's living in ſin, in expectation of dying penitent; nor give unſcriptural encouragement to ſuch fallacious appearances: yet knowing that nothing is too hard for the Lord, we ſhould be ready to aſſiſt with our counſel and prayers, even thoſe perſons who have been enemies to us; rendering them every kind of ſervice, and ſhewing them every ſpecies of courteouſneſs, except that of flattering them in their falſe confidence; without being wearied of well-doing by reiterated diſappointments; yet reminding them of their former relapſes, and ſolemnly warning them no longer to deal deceitfully. But the love of ſin, and its ſuppoſed advantages and pleaſures, joined with the pride of the human heart, if they be not mortified by the grace of God, will prevail againſt all convictions and reſolutions. Hence many *ſeek* to enter in and are not able: they ſeem in earneſt, but there is ſome reſerve, ſome Herodias, ſome beloved ſecret ſin, of which they are ready to ſay, as Lot of Zoar, is it not a little one? They are unwilling to look upon themſelves as in danger of everlaſting miſery: they hope for ſome abatement, or ſome allowance; or propoſe to make ſome compromiſe to bolſter up their hopes, yet keep their ſin: they refrain from other ſins, they do many things, and give liberally, yea puniſh themſelves ſeverely: they abſtain at ſome times, and as it were, let their ſin depart a little way, provided it remain within call. But finally to divorce Herodias! To ſell all, and follow Chriſt, bearing the croſs! Alas! if this be the caſe, they muſt have longer time to conſider; they muſt poſtpone, though not forego, the thoughts of eternal life, and venture all conſequences: they are ſorrowful but depart from Chriſt, determined to keep the world at preſent, and hope for ſome future ſeaſon, when ſalvation may be had without ſuch coſtly ſacrifices. Yet the word of God is peremptory: He is of one mind, and who can turn him! The expected abatement, the favourable ſeaſon, is waited for in vain; the conviction wears off, the heart grows hard, and at length the poor ſinner is driven away in his wickedneſs, and left without hope to execrate his folly. Would we eſcape this dreadful end, we muſt earneſtly ſeek for grace to enable us, "if "our right hand, or eye, or foot offend us," reſolutely to part with it: without reſerve, or delay, we muſt hearken to the voice of Chriſt, finally to divorce every ſin, and renounce all that leads to ſin; and ſtand prepared, as called to it by his command and in his providence, to forſake all for his ſake, and to follow him bearing our croſs, as his true diſciples. Nor let us forget to obſerve, that they who would ſerve God, muſt ſeparate from the ſociety of ſinners, whoſe conduct is an abomination to the true chriſtian, and who reciprocally hold him in abhorrence.—We may alſo obſerve for our comfort, that though wicked men and deceivers often practiſe and proſper, yet their power is limited; and however they may impoſe on others, they cannot hurt the ſervant of God, who truſteth in him; but in due time ſhall be conſtrained to confeſs that

the oxen, and upon the ſheep: *there ſhall be* a very grievous murrain.

4 And the LORD ſhall ſever between the cattle of Iſrael, and the cattle of Egypt: and there ſhall nothing die of all *that is* the children's of Iſrael.

5 And the LORD appointed a ſet time, ſaying, To-morrow the LORD ſhall do this thing in the land.

6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Iſrael died not one.

7 And Pharaoh ſent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Iſraelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of aſhes of the furnace, and let Moſes ſprinkle it towards the heaven in the ſight of Pharaoh.

9 And it ſhall become ſmall duſt in all the land of Egypt, and ſhall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains, upon man, and upon beaſt, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10 And they took aſhes of the furnace, and ſtood before Pharaoh, and Moſes ſprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains, upon man, and upon beaſt.

11 And the magicians could not ſtand before Moſes, becauſe of the boils: for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had ſpoken unto Moſes.

13 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Riſe up early in the morning, and ſtand before Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

14 For

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that the Lord is with him. And whether God do, or do not, exempt his people from the common afflictions of the world, he will make all at laſt to "return and diſcern be- "tween the righteous and the wicked; between him that "ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not." (*Mal.* iii. 18.)

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 6. *All the cattle.*] That is, great multitudes of all kinds were ſpeedily ſwept away, all over Egypt. The Egyptians idolized their cattle, the deſtruction of which evinced their ſtupidity, and diſplayed the glory of Iſrael's God.

V. 7. *Was hardened*, &c.] Pharaoh had ſo long done violence to his conſcience, that it was now become callous, and as it were ſeared with an hot iron. So that, though his curioſity led him to enquire about the cattle of Iſrael, yet the miraculous preſervation of them, according to the expreſs prediction of Moſes, made no manner of impreſſion upon him.

V. 9. *And it*, &c.] The ſprinkling of the aſhes was merely a token of God's operation, and could have no effect in producing the diſeaſe: but it might be a ſignificant emblem of the corrupting and heating of the air with ſuch baleful effluvia, as produced theſe effects; and denote that the God of heaven, even the Lord God of Iſrael, was the author of this plague.—Though the former miracles ceaſed, diſtreſſed, and impoveriſhed the Egyptians, yet their health and perſons had hitherto been untouched: but the judgments of God came nearer and nearer; ſo that terrible and painful inflammations began to ſeize their bodies, as well as to prey upon the poor remains of their cattle.—(*Job* ii. 7, 8.)

V. 11. *The boil*, &c.] The magicians, though baffled, had hitherto it ſeems perſiſted in the conteſt; but, being viſited by this loathſome and painful diſorder, they were now rendered contemptible, and finally driven away.

V. 12. *And the Lord*, &c.] The Lord had declared twice, that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh, (v. 2. vii. 3.) But this is the firſt time, in which it is expreſſly ſaid that he actually did harden his heart; which expreſſion is afterwards ſeveral times repeated. Hence we may infer, that as God had before permitted and appointed a variety of events, which had a tendency to increaſe Pharaoh's obduracy; ſo now in puniſhment of his preſumptuous rebellion, he totally gave him up to his own heart's luſts, and to the power of Satan: nor can we interpret the expreſſion too ſtrongly; if we only remember this one thing, that God did not by his own power create any hardneſs or wickedneſs in his heart; "for God "is not tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man," (*James*, i. 13—17.) Certainly it was God's ſettled purpoſe to have Pharaoh finally hardened, for the accompliſhment of which he effectually provided, and in which he doubtleſs was perfectly righteous. Indeed *we* can ſee, that this proud tyrant and cruel oppreſſor from the firſt deſerved to be made an example, by the juſt judge of the univerſe: and provided none are puniſhed who do not deſerve it, and none above their deſerts, there can be no cauſe of complaint, or ground of objection. Hardneſs of heart is a figurative expreſſion, denoting that inſenſibility of mind, upon which neither threatenings nor promiſes, judgments nor mercies, can make any abiding impreſſion: but the conſcience being ſtupified, and the heart filled with inſolent pride and preſumption, a man perſiſts in determined

14 For I will at this time ſend all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy ſervants, and upon thy people: that thou mayeſt know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

15 For now I will ſtretch out my hand, that I may ſmite thee and thy people with peſtilence; and thou ſhalt be cut off from the earth.

16 And in very deed for this *cauſe* have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

17 As yet exalteſt thou thyſelf againſt my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

18 Behold, to-morrow about this time, I will cauſe it to rain a very grievous hail, ſuch as hath not been in Egypt, ſince the foundation thereof, even until now.

19 Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou haſt in the field: *for upon* every man and beaſt which ſhall be found in the field, and ſhall not be brought home, the hail ſhall come down upon them, and they ſhall die.

20 He that feared the word of the LORD amongſt the ſervants of Pharaoh, made his ſervants and his cattle flee into the houſes.

21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD, left his ſervants and his cattle in the field.

22 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, ſtretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; upon man, and upon beaſt, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23 And Moſes ſtretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the LORD ſent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, ſuch as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, ſince it became a nation.

25 And the hail ſmote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beaſt: and the hail ſmote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

26 Only in the land of Goſhen, where the children of Iſrael *were*, was there no hail.

27 And Pharaoh ſent, and called for Moſes and Aaron, and ſaid unto them, I have ſinned *this* time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

28 Intreat

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mined impenitence, unbelief, and diſobedience. The tendency in our nature to this ſtate of mind is alſo called the ſtony heart, and to it is oppoſed the heart of fleſh, the broken and contrite, and the tender heart. Though the boil was upon the magicians, yet probably Pharaoh had eſcaped it, which would ſerve to increaſe his obduracy.

V. 16. *For this*, &c.] The Lord, who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will, and who well knew the heart of Pharaoh, in his providence advanced him to the throne, and exalted him to ſuch an height of proſperity, as he knew would exceedingly enhance his inſolence and preſumption; and this at the time, when he intended to liberate Iſrael: on purpoſe that Pharaoh, in the pride and ſtoutneſs of his heart, might engage and perſiſt in this conteſt; from which he intended to take occaſion to diſplay his almighty power, ſovereign authority, and awful juſtice, in the deſtruction of that proud monarch; that all the nations might hear, and know that the God of Iſrael was indeed the Lord of the whole earth, for the glory of his name, and for an extenſive and durable advantage to mankind.

V. 17. *As yet exalteſt*, &c?] Art thou ſtill ſo infatuated, as to oppoſe thy feeble arm againſt that omnipotence, the effects of which thou haſt already witneſſed, and experienced to thy coſt?

V. 18. *Such as*, &c.] Rain of any kind is very rare in Egypt, but ſuch a tremendous tempeſt would be entirely unprecedented.

V. 20, 21.] When Moſes had delivered the meſſage, the report ſpread ſwiftly among the people; and ſome were ſo far influenced by what they had ſeen and heard, as to expect the ſtorm and provide againſt it: yet we do not perceive by the ſequel, that many of them were partakers of that true faith, *which habitually* and *abidingly* receives, and is influenced by, the teſtimony of God, and eſpecially in thoſe things which pertain unto the ſalvation of the ſoul. This ſeems to have been only a tranſient impreſſion of terror and conviction, which produced no laſting effects.

V. 25. *Both man*, &c.] Hitherto the lives of the Egyptians had been ſpared; but this plague firſt began to deſtroy them.

V. 30. *I know*, &c.] Moſes knew, that Pharaoh and his ſervants would not yet give up the conteſt, both as he was acquainted with God's purpoſe, and with the human heart. He was ſenſible that this declaration was not the effect

28 Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye ſhall ſtay no longer.

29 And Moſes ſaid unto him, As ſoon as I am gone out of the city, I will ſpread abroad my hands unto the LORD: *and* the thunder ſhall ceaſe, neither ſhall there be any more hail; that thou mayeſt know, how that the earth *is* the LORD's.

30 But as for thee and thy ſervants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.

31 And the flax, and the barley was ſmitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* bolled.

32 But the wheat and the rye were not ſmitten: for they *were* not grown up.

33 And Moſes went out of the city from Pharaoh, and ſpread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceaſed, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

34 And when Pharaoh ſaw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceaſed, he ſinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his ſervants.

35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Iſrael go, as the LORD had ſpoken by Moſes.

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effect of any gracious change, but extorted merely by terror and anguiſh of ſpirit.

V. 31. *Was bolled.*] That is, it was grown up into ſtems, or ſtalks.

V. 32. *Were not grown up.*] And therefore they were not ſo much expoſed, and were in conſequence preſerved.

V. 33. *Moſes went out of*, &c.] Moſes, being aſſured of the divine protection, expreſſed his confidence before Pharaoh and his ſervants, by going forth out of the city in the midſt of this tremendous ſtorm: and thus alſo he illuſtrated the diſtinction and ſeparation betwixt Egypt and Iſrael, before he began his interceſſion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Did the Lord commonly execute his full vengeance at once, the hearts of ſinners would be diſmayed, and they would not dare to rebel with ſuch ſtoutneſs and contempt as they generally do: but "becauſe ſentence againſt an "evil work is not executed ſpeedily; therefore the heart of "the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil." (*Eccle.* viii. 11.) But "evil purſueth ſinners," and with rapid, though often unnoticed, ſteps approaches nearer and nearer; nor is there any poſſible eſcape but by repentance, and turning unto God in the way of his appointment. God hath a variety of methods, whereby he can impoveriſh thoſe who have grown rich by injuſtice, and deprive men of thoſe things which they have idolized: and if they will not regard when he bereaves them of their ſubſtance, he can fill their bodies with diſeaſe, and their hearts with terror, and at length cut them off in their wickedneſs.—Satan encourages his ſervants with hopes of great advantage, but he cannot enſure their impunity even in this world; and they, who wait patiently, ſhall ſee the folly of ſeducers and deceivers made manifeſt to all men, as that of theſe magicians alſo was. (2 *Tim.* iii. 9.) Though men treat the Lord with contempt, and ſet him at defiance, yet they cannot defeat his purpoſes; nay, he will conſtrain them to ſubſerve his glory: and many, in his myſterious providence, have been exceedingly proſpered, and even exalted upon thrones, only to diſcover the wickedneſs of their diſpoſitions, in order that the juſtice and power of God might be diſplayed in their deſtruction. Yet they have none to blame but themſelves for that pride and ungodlineſs, which abuſe both the bounty and patience of God into an occaſion, and encouragement to ſin: for *however* the Lord harden the hearts of men, he always does it judicially, as a puniſhment of former ſins; and generally of the ſin of hardening their own hearts under ſolemn warnings, deep convictions, ſevere rebukes, and remarkable deliverances. Even in the midſt of wicked nations, which are ripe for vengeance, ſome are more deſtitute of all fear of God, and more daring in ſin, than others. But alas! that men ſhould be more careful of their cattle and property, than of their ſouls!—Would we eſcape the threatened vengeance of God, we muſt notice his warnings, and flee for refuge at his appointment: for they, who diſregard his word, will be convinced of its truth when it is too late. Under the proſpect of impending deſtruction, the anguiſh of ſuffering, and the diſmay of conſcience, the proudeſt ſinner is often appalled, and the moſt humiliating confeſſions, and moſt pious language are extorted which men uſe, not becauſe they thoroughly mean it, but becauſe they are conſcious that it ſuits their caſe and ſituation.—This is indeed neither voluntary nor abiding, and therefore cannot avail the impenitent ſinner; it is, however, honourable to God, and illuſtrates his juſtice in puniſhing ſuch as having reſpite, return back to, and are hardened in, iniquity. And though we muſt ſtill be ready to pray for our enemies; yet we muſt not judge of men's characters by ſuch tranſient pangs of conviction, but by their habitual conduct. Whilſt all things concur in ſealing and haſtening the obſtinate ſinner's condemnation, the Lord gives his people ſafety, amidſt the ſtorms and tempeſts which rage without, but which cannot even diſturb the ſweet calm that prevails within; "for the "work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of "righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever." (*Iſaiah*, xxxii. 17.)

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Moſes ſent to Pharaoh to denounce the judgment of the locuſts, v. 1—6. 2d. Pharaoh perſuaded by his ſervants to let Iſrael go, ſending for Moſes, treating with him, and driving him away with threats, v. 7—11. 3d. The plague of the locuſts, v. 12—15. 4th. Moſes ſent for, intreating the Lord, the locuſts removed, and Pharaoh again hardened, v. 16—20. 5th. The plague of darkneſs, Pharaoh again treating with Moſes, but again hardened, and again driving him away with threats, v. 21—29.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his ſervants; that I might ſhew theſe my ſigns before him:

2 And that thou mayeſt tell in the ears of thy ſon, and of thy ſon's ſon, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my ſigns which I have done amongſt them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD.

3 And Moſes and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuſe to humble thyſelf before me? Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

4 Elſe if thou refuſe to let my people go, behold to-morrow will I bring the locuſts into thy coaſt.

5 And they ſhall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to ſee the earth: and they ſhall eat the reſidue of that which is eſcaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and ſhall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field.

6 And they ſhall fill thy houſes, and the houſes of all thy ſervants, and the houſes of all the Egyptians: which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have ſeen, ſince the day that they were upon the earth, unto this day. And he turned himſelf, and went out from Pharaoh.

7 And Pharaoh's ſervants ſaid unto him, How long ſhall this man be a ſnare unto us? Let the men go, that they may ſerve the LORD their God: Knoweſt thou not yet, that Egypt is deſtroyed?

8 And Moſes and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he ſaid unto them, Go, ſerve the LORD your God: *but* who *are* they that ſhall go?

9 And Moſes ſaid, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our ſons, and with our daughters; with our flocks, and with our herds will we go: for we *muſt hold* a feaſt unto the LORD.

10 And he ſaid unto them, Let the LORD be ſo with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look *to it*, for evil *is* before you.

11 Not ſo: go now ye *that are* men, and ſerve the LORD, for that you did deſire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's preſence.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locuſts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.

13 And Moſes ſtretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an eaſt-wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night: *and* when it was morning, the eaſt-wind brought the locuſts.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 6. *Which neither*, &c.] The ravages, which locuſts make in thoſe countries, are frequently very dreadful. (*Joel*, i. 4—7. ii. 1—11.) They even darken the earth, by intercepting with their inconceivable multitudes the light of the ſun; they turn fruitful countries into deſolate deſerts, and leave the wretched inhabitants to periſh with famine; nor can they by any means be reſiſted or eſcaped. Theſe locuſts were dreadful beyond example and compariſon, in their ſize and multitudes, and in the deſolations which they occaſioned: and they were thus foretold, that the hand of the Lord in ſending them might be more evident.

V. 10. *Let the Lord be ſo*, &c.] This was either ſpoken in ſcorn and contempt, as if Pharaoh would ſay, 'Let the 'Lord be with you, and take care of you, if he can, but I 'will not let you go:' or by way of imprecation; as if he meant to ſay, 'I *would* that the Lord may never be 'any more with you, than I will let you go: for that I am 'reſolved, I never will conſent to.' On the contrary he intended to keep the children, as hoſtages to enſure the return of their parents: And he declared, that if Moſes and Aaron continued thus troubleſome, he would call them to account, and inflict puniſhment on them, for all the damage, which had been done: and conſidering his mad preſumption, he would certainly have attempted it, had not the Lord diſmayed and reſtrained him.

14 And

14 And the locuſts went up over all the land of Egypt, and reſted in all the coaſts of Egypt: very grievous *were they*; before them there were no ſuch locuſts as they, neither after them ſhall be ſuch.

15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, ſo that the land was darkened, and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

16 Then Pharaoh called for Moſes and Aaron in haſte; and he ſaid, I have ſinned againſt the LORD your God, and againſt you.

17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my ſin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

19 And the LORD turned a mighty ſtrong weſt-wind, which took away the locuſts, and caſt them into the Red ſea: there remained not one locuſt in all the coaſts of Egypt.

20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, ſo that he would not let the children of Iſrael go.

21 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkneſs over the land of Egypt, even darkneſs *which* may be felt.

22 And Moſes ſtretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkneſs in all the land of Egypt three days.

23 They ſaw not one another, neither roſe any from his place for three days: but all the children of Iſrael had light in their dwellings.

24 And Pharaoh called unto Moſes, and ſaid, Go ye, ſerve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be ſtayed: let your little ones alſo go with you.

25 And Moſes ſaid, Thou muſt give us alſo ſacrifices, and burnt-offerings, that we may ſacrifice unto the LORD our God.

26 Our cattle alſo ſhall go with us; there ſhall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof muſt we take to ſerve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we muſt ſerve the LORD, until we come thither.

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

28 And Pharaoh ſaid unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyſelf, ſee my face no more: for in *that* day thou ſeeſt my face, thou ſhalt die.

29 And Moſes ſaid, Thou haſt ſpoken well, I will ſee thy face again no more.

CHAP.

V. 16, 17.] Pharaoh now had nothing before his eyes but the inevitable death of himſelf, and his people by famine; unleſs ſome reſpite could be obtained. He therefore confeſſed his ſins to Moſes, craved forgiveneſs of him, and intreated him to pray for him: but we never read that he confeſſed his ſins unto the Lord, humbled himſelf before him, or beſought him to forgive him. (2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 12—19.)

V. 19. *Red ſea*, &c.] Or *weedy ſea*, for ſo it is in the original.—The Greek tranſlators of the Bible call it the Red ſea, either from the colour of the waters, of the ſoil, or of the weeds; or from the neighbourhood of the Edomites, whoſe name ſignifies *red*. This is a large arm of the ſea, which runs up between Arabia and Idumea on one hand, and Egypt on the other, and ſeparates the continents of Africa and Aſia from each other; except as they communicate by the narrow iſthmus of Suez, which lies betwixt the end of the Red ſea, and the Mediterranean ſea.—Some learned men are of opinion, that only a ſmall part of this arm of the ſea was intended, and that the *Red*, or *weedy* ſea ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the Arabian gulph.—The Red ſea in many ancient writers is uſed for that which is now called the Indian ocean.

V. 21. *Darkneſs*, &c.] It is generally ſuppoſed that the clammy fog, which occaſioned this judgment, extinguiſhed all the lamps of the Egyptians, and left them in total darkneſs; which could be felt in the pain which it excited.—But certainly it was ſuch a darkneſs as we have no conception of, and nearly allied to the "blackneſs of darkneſs "for ever." (*Jude*, 13. *Rev.* xvi. 10, 11.)

V. 23. *They ſaw not*, &c.] It is a tradition of the Jews, that the Egyptians were affrighted by horrible noiſes, occaſioned by evil ſpirits, and that this is the meaning of the expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, "He ſent evil angels among "them!" (*Pſalm* lxxviii. 49.) Doubtleſs their own conſciences would be filled with horror, and inflict torment upon them, when thus incloſed in this tremendous darkneſs.—The Iſraelites might now have marched off unmoleſted; but it was the Lord's pleaſure that they ſhould go forth, not as abject fugitives, but as triumphant conquerors.

V. 29. *Thou haſt ſpoken*, &c.] The next chapter ſeems an appendix to this, and the conference therein recorded appears to have taken place directly; and Moſes afterwards went out, intending not to ſee Pharaoh's face again.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ultimate end of all the Lord's diſpenſations, whether in judgment or in mercy, is the manifeſtation of his

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. Moses informed that one more plague was coming upon Egypt; and the Israelites ordered to borrow jewels of silver and gold of the Egyptians, v. 1, 2. 2d. Moses honoured by the Egyptians, denouncing the death of the first-born, and in anger leaving Pharaoh, v. 3—8. 3d. The Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron, and his works by them, v. 9, 10.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let *you* go, he shall surely thrust you out hence all together.

2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

4 And

own glory: and though we may not at present clearly discern it; yet we shall hereafter behold it in its full lustre, and the whole world shall either with joyful acclamations proclaim, or in silence admit, that he is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works. At present it is our duty to believe, and we shall hereafter see the glory of God.—The examples of severity and goodness, which are recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, were written for our profit; and the Lord's wisdom and justice in them will more evidently appear, if our own experience evince their extensive and lasting usefulness. Whatever we learn from the Word, and from the works of God, we should point out and interpret to our children, and shew them the power, wisdom, justice, and love of the Lord displayed in them; for they were intended not only for our good, but that of our children also.—We should also remember that Satan and his instruments are extremely averse to our serving God with our sons and our daughters; and that they employ various methods of keeping *them* from the Lord.—We have need therefore to be more peremptory about it, and careful to initiate them, even when "little "ones," in the ways and worship of God; "for of such "is the kingdom of heaven:" and we ought not to imitate some *apparently* religious parents who act as if they were of Pharaoh's opinion, and supposed that the service of God was only for men and women; for they allow their children to stay behind when they go to worship, and permit them to spend their time in dissipation and vanity; as if they would leave them in Egypt, as hostages for their own return.—Nor should young people forget the admonition of the Lord, "Remember thy Creator in the days "of thy youth;" while Satan's counsel is to keep children in a state of slavery to sin and to the world, till they grow older.—But we must not only serve God with our households, but with all our substance, not leaving a hoof behind; not suffering the enemy to keep possession of any part of it, either by avariciously hoarding it, or by spending it upon our pride and lusts: considering all our possessions, as the Lord's property committed to our stewardship, and not knowing what he may immediately demand; we shall be prepared to expend, or part with, any proportion that may be required, with less hesitation and reluctance.—Neither should we regard the contempt and reproach, nor even the threats of those, who would deter us from serving God: they will often affright us with the idea, that evil is before us; but we shall not find it so, if we trust and obey the Lord. He will be for us, and perhaps they will be ere long constrained to bow before us, and make their supplications unto us: certainly, in the days of adversity, and in the gloomy vale of death, when the wicked are silent in darkness, consumed with terrors, and tormented by their own consciences, we shall walk in the light of God's countenance, and rejoice in his salvation: and when they are driven into the blackness of eternal darkness, we shall have an inheritance amongst the saints in light eternal. Let us then lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth near. Only "looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God:" for the hardest sinner often trembles, the most stupid is sometimes self-condemned; nay some, that are finally lost, have "been al-"most persuaded to be Christians." But pride of heart, the love of sin, and procrastination form the three-fold cord which they cannot break; upon such persons all counsel is thrown away, though backed with the evidence of the most undeniable facts, and the certain prospect of destruction. They would treat about reconciliation, but they will not consent to yield unreservedly, to part with *every* sin, and cast themselves wholly upon the Lord's mercy: He therefore rejects their proposals with disdain; and every relenting and respite leaves them still harder, as the winter sun thaws the snow, which, when its beams are withdrawn, congeals into ice.—We may find such persons using good words, and putting the Lord's servants in his place, as if they were *gods* to them, (*Ex.* vii. 1,) and seeming to expect salvation from them: but they pray not earnestly and constantly for themselves; and therefore sin retains its dominion, and Satan his possession, and their last state is worse then the first.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. *V.* 1. *Yet will I*, &c.] It seems that this was a secret revelation to Moses, whilst he was in the presence of Pharaoh, in order that he might denounce this last dreadful judgment, before he went out from him. Doubtless Moses would be glad to hear of so speedy a period being put to this contest, which desolated Egypt in order to deliver Israel.

V. 3. *Very great*, &c.] The people reverenced Moses as a very extraordinary person, of wonderful courage, wisdom, and sanctity, and endued with powers of inflicting

4 And Moſes ſaid, Thus ſaith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midſt of Egypt.

5 And all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt ſhall die, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh that ſitteth upon his throne, even unto the firſt-born of the maid-ſervant that *is* behind the mill; and all the firſt-born of beaſts.

6 And there ſhall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, ſuch as there was none like it, nor ſhall be like it any more.

7 But againſt any of the children of Iſrael, ſhall not a dog move his tongue, againſt man or beaſt; that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Iſrael.

8 And all theſe thy ſervants ſhall come down unto me, and bow down themſelves unto me, ſaying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you: that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

10 And Moſes and Aaron did all theſe wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, ſo that he would not let the children of Iſrael go out of his land.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. The month of Iſrael's deliverance appointed to be the firſt month of their year, v. 1, 2. 2d. God's command to Moſes concerning the paſſover, and the feaſt of unleavened bread; and Moſes delivering it to the elders of Iſrael, v. 3—28. 3d. The firſt-born of Egypt ſlain, Moſes and Aaron ſent for; the Iſraelites ſent away in haſte, ſpoiling the Egyptians, and marching out attended by a mixed multitude, v. 29—39. 4th. The date of their departure, and the fulfilment of God's promiſe to Abraham, v. 40—42. 5th. Further rules reſpecting the paſſover, v. 43—51.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ſaying,

2 This month *ſhall be* unto you the beginning

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ing judgments, or removing them at pleaſure: and probably many of them were ſecretly perſuaded, that he had juſtice on his ſide; and were diſpoſed to blame Pharaoh, as the author of their calamities: for though princes are oft infatuated, and hireling courtiers flatter them and perſuade them of the contrary; yet the moſt of the people generally favour the cauſe of the oppreſſed, and conſider ſome meaſure of liberty as the common right of mankind.

V. 4. *Will I go out*, &c.] The Lord went out as a mighty conqueror to trample down, and triumph over his enemies.

V. 7. *Move his tongue*, &c.] 'None ſhall dare to do, 'or to ſpeak any evil of them; but all ſhall ſtand in awe 'of them.'

V. 8. *In a great anger*, &c.] Moſes thus expreſſed his deteſtation of Pharaoh's obſtinacy, who probably treated this laſt meſſage with contempt: and thus he ſolemnly left him to the judgment of God, as an incurable rebel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord has inflicted ſo many, and ſuch ſevere judgments, that man can ſcarcely conceive any thing worſe; he has ſtill more terrible plagues in reſerve: but he generally executes thoſe laſt, which he denounced firſt (iv. 23.) Still "enduring with much long ſuffering even the veſſels "of wrath, which are fitted for deſtruction, that he may "ſhew his wrath, and make his power known." (*Rom.* ix. 22.) But what are all theſe ten plagues combined, when compared with the wrath to come, that one plague reſerved for all obſtinate rebels in another world!—The Lord can make his people a burdenſome ſtone to all, who burden themſelves with them, (*Zech.* xii. 3;) and render all ſenſible that it is at their peril they touch them; nay he is able to give them favour in the ſight of thoſe who have been their enemies.—When he enables his ſervants to maintain a conſiſtency of character, he will put ſuch honour upon them, as ſhall ſilence all that ſlander, confound all who deſpiſe them, and conſtrain all to approve of their conduct, reverence their perſons, and even to bow down before them: and when the people of God ſhall triumph in his redemption, and their enemies cry out under the anguiſh of his indignation, the difference will be too evident to remain longer unnoticed. They, who are employed of God in public ſervices, may, conſiſtently with the deepeſt humility, magnify their office; and without deviating from chriſtian meekneſs, may expreſs deep indignation, as well as ſorrow, at the wickedneſs of mankind; after his example, who "looked around with anger being grieved with the hard-"neſs of their hearts." Such anger againſt the ſin of thoſe, whoſe good they have perſeveringly ſought in vain, and for whom their prayers have again and again prevailed, is a terrible indication, and common forerunner, of the wrath of God. The Lord, however, will at laſt be glorified in all his diſpenſations; and as he hath foretold that his Goſpel would be ſlighted and abuſed, we muſt not think the worſe of it on that account.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 2. *This month*, &c.] That is, the month Abib, (*Exod.* xxxiv. 18. *Deut.* xvi. 1;) called elſewhere, Niſan, (*Eſther* iii. 7:) which anſwers nearly to the latter part

ginning of months: it *ſhall be* the firſt month of the year to you.

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Iſrael, ſaying, In the tenth *day* of this month, they ſhall take to them every man a lamb, according to the houſe of *their* fathers, a lamb for an houſe.

4 And if the houſhold be too little for the lamb, let him, and his neighbour next unto his houſe, take *it* according to the number of the ſouls; every man, according to his eating, ſhall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb ſhall be without blemiſh, a male of the firſt year: ye ſhall take *it* out from the ſheep or from the goats.

6 And ye ſhall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the ſame month: and the whole aſſembly of the congregation of Iſrael ſhall kill it in the evening.

7 And they ſhall take of the blood, and ſtrike *it* on the two ſide poſts, and on the upper door-poſt of the houſes, wherein they ſhall eat it.

8 And they ſhall eat the fleſh in that night; roaſt with fire, and unleavened bread, *and* with bitter *herbs* they ſhall eat it.

9 Eat not of it raw, nor ſodden at all with water, but roaſt with fire: his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

10 And ye ſhall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye ſhall burn with fire.

11 And thus ſhall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your ſhoes on your feet, and your ſtaff in your hand: and ye ſhall eat it in haſte; it *is* the LORD's paſſover.

12 For I will paſs through the land of Egypt this night, and will ſmite all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beaſt: and againſt all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I *am* the LORD.

13 And the blood ſhall be to you for a token upon the houſes where you *are:* and when I ſee the blood, I will paſs over you, and the plague ſhall not be upon you, to deſtroy *you,* when I ſmite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day ſhall be unto you for a memorial; and you ſhall keep it a feaſt to the LORD throughout your generations: you ſhall keep it a feaſt by an ordinance for ever.

15 Seven

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part of March, and the beginning of April, with us.—This had hitherto been the ſeventh month; and the Iſraelites continued to compute ſeveral of their civil concerns in the ſame manner: but in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, when they were formed into a nation and a church, and received as it were a new kind of exiſtence, it was appointed to be the firſt month of the year to them, and their ſacred inſtitutions were in general reckoned from it. This new ſtyle began the year with the ſpring, when the face of the creation was renewed.

V. 3. *Speak ye unto,* &c.] Doubtleſs the congregation had been inſtructed to hold themſelves in readineſs to depart at an hour's warning, and were much engaged in preparation; yet they muſt ſpare time to obſerve a ſacred feſtival; for we muſt never be too buſy to attend upon God's ordinances.—The Iſraelites were enjoined to eat the paſſover with their families and relatives, as much as poſſible.

V. 4. *Make your count,* &c.] That every one might appear to have an equal intereſt in this typical ſacrifice, they were to join in the purchaſe of the lamb, according to their numbers.

V. 6. *Ye ſhall keep,* &c.] This preparation would prevent diſtraction at the time; and was a figurative inſtruction to prepare their hearts for ſolemn ordinances.—Each of the congregation ſeems to have killed his own lamb; but it was ordered to be done publicly in the preſence of the aſſembly of the elders, or repreſentatives.—It is generally ſuppoſed that the paſſover was ſlain between 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and ſun-ſet.

V. 7. *The two ſide-poſts, and on the,* &c.] But not on the threſhold.

V. 10. *And ye ſhall let nothing,* &c.] Leſt they ſhould reſerve it for ſuperſtitious purpoſes.

V. 11. *With your,* &c.] The Iſraelites were ordered to eat the paſſover as men in haſte, being in readineſs to ſet out upon their journey. There is no appearance of the paſſover being afterwards eaten in this poſture: Chriſt and his apoſtles ſeem to have eaten it ſitting. (*Matt.* xxvi. 20. *Mark,* xiv. 18. *Luke,* xxii. 14.) Probably ſeveral of theſe circumſtances were only intended to be obſerved at that time, and not afterwards.

V. 12. *I will,* &c.] The awful proofs which Jehovah gave of his preſence and vengeance upon his enemies, was a triumph over the gods of Egypt; and probably was attended with a deva ſtation of their idols and temples; as Dagon was thrown down before the ark. (1 *Sam.* v. 1.)

V. 14. *You ſhall keep it,* &c.] The paſſover was both a remembrance of Iſrael's preſervation and deliverance out

15 Seven days ſhall ye eat unleavened bread, even the firſt day ye ſhall put away leaven out of your houſes: for whoſoever eateth leavened bread, from the firſt day until the ſeventh day, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from Iſrael.

16 And in the firſt day, *there ſhall be* an holy convocation, and in the ſeventh day there ſhall be an holy convocation to you: no manner of work ſhall be done in them, ſave *that* which every man muſt eat, that only may be done of you.

17 And ye ſhall obſerve *the feaſt of* unleavened bread; for in this ſelf-ſame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore ſhall ye obſerve this day in your generations, by an ordinance for ever.

18 In the firſt *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye ſhall eat unlea-

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out of Egypt, and a remarkable type of Chriſt. Though the Iſraelites were not guilty of the ſame crimes, and with the ſame aggravations, as the Egyptians were; yet they alſo were ſinners. Their preſervation and deliverance were not the recompence of their own righteouſneſs, but the reſult of diſtinguiſhing mercy: (*Deut.* ix. 4—6. *Ezek.* xx. 7—9;) of this they were reminded; and by this ordinance inſtructed that all bleſſings came to them, being ſinners, through the ſhedding and ſprinkling of blood, as prefiguring the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, (*Rev.* xiii, 8;) according to God's purpoſe, ſhewn by theſe types and ſhadows. The ſlaying of the paſchal lamb, the ſprinkling of the blood, and the eating of the fleſh by the Iſraelites in Egypt, was a confeſſion of ſin, a profeſſion of faith, and an act of external obedience; in which doubtleſs ſome were ſpiritual worſhippers, who through the ſign diſcerned the thing ſignified; the moſt, it is to be feared, reſted in the outward performance, which however ſecured the external deliverance: but had any, in preſumption and contempt, refuſed obedience, they would have been expoſed to the ſame judgments as the Egyptians were. In after ages the power and love of God, in the deliverance of Iſrael from Egypt, were commemorated by this obſervance: and though numbers ſaw no farther; yet ſome would diſcover *the price* of that redemption, and of all other bleſſings; and to them it would not only be a joyful tribute of gratitude for former temporal mercies, but an act of humble faith and dependence on the promiſed Saviour even until his coming. Though ſome of theſe circumſtances might have reference to the haſty departure of Iſrael out of Egypt; yet they all more aptly ſhadow forth the great Antitype. In him every true Iſraelite has an equal intereſt: he was indeed the Lamb without ſpot and blemiſh (1 *Peter* i. 19.) In the fulneſs of time, 4000 years after the firſt promiſe of him, he was ſlain for ſinners: the whole aſſembly of the congregation of Iſrael demanding, and witneſſing his death. Not only was his blood ſhed, but he ſuffered agonies unknown from that juſtice of God, which is as a conſuming fire, and which is here *ſhadowed* forth by the roaſting of the paſchal lamb. But the ſhedding of his blood, and the intenſeneſs of his ſufferings, are only the preparation of ſalvation; without the application of it to ourſelves, we ſhall reap no benefit from it: receiving the atonement by faith alone gives ſecurity to our guilty ſouls, that we ſhall not be deſtroyed in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Whilſt we reap the benefit of the Redeemer's blood, we muſt not be aſhamed openly to profeſs our dependence on him, and obligations to him; but the vile apoſtate, or the abuſer of Goſpel Grace, who tramples the blood under his feet, contracts the deepeſt guilt. (*Heb.* x. 28, 29.) And as the Lamb of God is the ſacrifice for our ſins; he is alſo the food of our ſouls, on which we ought "to feed in our "hearts by faith with thankſgiving:" receiving him, and the whole of his purchaſed bleſſings, with equal valuation; and not ſeparating his teaching and government, from his ſacrifice. Leaven, the known emblem of hypocriſy (*Luke* xii. 1,) and of malice and wickedneſs, (1 *Cor.* v. 7, 8,) muſt be purged out, and the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth ſubſtituted. The true penitent alone, who *bitterly* mourns for ſin, (*Zech.* xii. 10,) and mingles his rejoicing in Chriſt with godly ſorrow, can properly eat this paſſover: temptations, and chaſtiſements, though they *ſeem* to alloy the feaſt, yet render it doubly ſweet to the experienced chriſtian; who refreſhed and ſtrengthened by this ſpiritual food, ſtands prepared to do his maſter's will, and to walk in his ways, though rough and narrow; having his loins girded about with truth, and his feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace: and being a ſtranger and pilgrim upon earth, he is ready to renounce the world and ſin, and to march with alacrity towards the heavenly Canaan. Some glimpſes of this light believers of old diſcovered: with the New Teſtament in our hands we may have clearer *notions* than they had; but the queſtion is, whether we have more *lively affections?*

V. 15. *Seven days*, &c.] This is a further type of the chriſtian's holy life, which is the fruit of the Saviour's ſuffering death, and the effect of true faith in him; in which the old leaven of ſin is put away with abhorrence, while love and purity unfeigned prevail; not only at a few favoured ſeaſons of ſpecial comfort in communion with God, but habitually and with continuance.—They who violated this command were either deprived of the privileges of an Iſraelite, or cut off by death; which may be examined more fully on another occaſion. This was an expreſſion of the Lord's indignation againſt ſuch as deſpiſed his command; and an emblem of his abhorrence of hypocriſy in thoſe who profeſs faith in Chriſt, and yet live in the practice of known ſin.

V. 16. *An holy convocation*, &c.] That is an aſſembly of the people for ſolemn worſhip, and for the offering of ſacrifices.—No manner of work was permitted to be done, that the people might be the more at liberty to attend on the ordinances of God.

vened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

19 Seven days ſhall there be no leaven found in your houſes: for whoſoever eateth that which is leavened, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from the congregation of Iſrael, whether he be a ſtranger or born in the land.

20 Ye ſhall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations ſhall ye eat unleavened bread.

21 Then Moſes called for all the elders of Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the paſſover.

22 And ye ſhall take a bunch of hyſſop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the baſon, and ſtrike the lintel and the two ſide-poſts with the blood that *is* in the baſon: and none of you ſhall go out at the door of his houſe until the morning.

23 For the LORD will paſs through to ſmite the Egyptians, and when he ſeeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two ſide-poſts, the LORD will paſs over the door, and will not ſuffer the deſtroyer to come in unto your houſes to ſmite *you*.

24 And ye ſhall obſerve this thing for an ordinance to thee, and to thy ſons for ever.

25 And it ſhall come to paſs, when ye be come to the land, which the LORD will give you according as he hath promiſed, that ye ſhall keep this ſervice.

26 And it ſhall come to paſs, when your children ſhall ſay unto you, What mean you by this ſervice?

27 That ye ſhall ſay, It *is* the ſacrifice of the LORD's paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, when he ſmote the Egyptians, and delivered our houſes. And the people bowed the head and worſhipped.

28 And the children of Iſrael went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moſes and Aaron, ſo did they.

29 And it came to paſs that at midnight the LORD ſmote all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh that ſat on his throne, unto the firſt-born of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firſt-born of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh roſe up in the night, he and all his ſervants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for *there was* not a houſe where *there was* not one dead.

31 And he called for Moſes and Aaron by night, and ſaid, Riſe up, *and* get you forth from amongſt my people, both you and the children of Iſrael: and go ſerve the LORD, as ye have ſaid.

32 Alſo take your flocks and your herds, as ye have ſaid, and be gone: and bleſs me alſo.

33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might ſend them out of the land in haſte: for they ſaid, We *be* all dead *men*.

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their ſhoulders.

V. 22. *None of you*, &c.] The blood which the Iſraelites had ſprinkled, was their only ſecurity from the deſtroying Angel, under the protection of which they were ſtedfaſtly to abide.

V. 27. *It is the ſacrifice.*] The paſſover was a ſacrifice, as offered to God, and typical of Chriſt: but it differed from all the other ſacrifices, in that no part of it was conſumed upon the altar. It typified the extreme ſufferings of Chriſt, and the application of his atonement to the conſcience; as others did his ſacrifice, when preſented to, and accepted of, the Father.

V. 29. *At midnight*, &c.] This circumſtance would exceedingly increaſe the terror of the tremendous execution. The Egyptians, for three days and nights juſt before, had been kept in perpetual ſolicitude and horror by the darkneſs; and now their reſt was broken by a more terrible calamity. By the death of the firſt-born they were righteouſly puniſhed for murdering the children of the Iſraelites; as well as for keping that nation in bondage, which God honoured by calling *his* ſon, and *his* firſt-born.

V. 30. *There was not*, &c.] Words can never expreſs the terror and bitterneſs of this ſudden blow from an inviſible hand, deſtroying the pride, hope, and comfort of every family, of every rank, throughout this populous kingdom: the whole nation at once mourning over their dead, and trembling for themſelves! (33.)

V. 34. *Their dough before*, &c.] The Iſraelites being kept in conſtant expectation of departing, were probably making preparation; but were driven away before their dough was baked, or even leavened. Thus the Lord enſured their preſent obſervance of the feaſt of unleavened bread; and their haſty departure would be ever after commemorated by the ſame annual feaſt.

35 And the children of Iſrael did according to the word of Moſes: and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of ſilver and jewels of gold, and raiment.

36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians, ſo that they lent unto them *ſuch things as they required:* and they ſpoiled the Egyptians.

37 And the children of Iſrael journeyed from Rameſes to Succoth, about ſix hundred thouſand on foot *that were* men, beſides children.

38 And a mixed multitude went up alſo with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.

39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: becauſe they were thruſt out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themſelves any victual.

40 Now the ſojourning of the children of Iſrael, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.

41 And it came to paſs, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the ſelf-ſame day it came to paſs, that all the hoſts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42 It *is* a night to be much obſerved unto the LORD, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this *is* that night of the LORD to be obſerved of all the children of Iſrael, in their generations.

43 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes and Aaron, This *is* the ordinance of the paſſover: there ſhall no ſtranger eat thereof.

44 But every man's ſervant that is bought for money, when thou haſt circumciſed him, then ſhall he eat thereof.

45 A foreigner, and an hired ſervant ſhall not eat thereof.

46 In one houſe ſhall it be eaten, thou ſhalt not carry forth ought of the fleſh abroad out of the houſe: neither ſhall ye break a bone thereof.

47 All the congregation of Iſrael ſhall keep it.

48 And when a ſtranger ſhall ſojourn with thee, and will keep the paſſover to the LORD, let all his males be circumciſed, and then let him come near and keep it; and he ſhall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumciſed perſon ſhall eat thereof.

49 One

V. 35. *They borrowed*, &c.] In this extreme terror, the Egyptians were willing to purchaſe the favour and the ſpeedy departure of Iſrael at any price: and thus the Lord both took care that their hard-earned wages ſhould at laſt be paid, and that the people ſhould be well provided for their journey.

V. 36. *Spoiled the Egyptians*, &c.] They departed laden with their wealth, as if they had plundered them in war.

V. 37. *Six hundred thouſand*, &c.] Conſidering the proportion that women and children bear in general to grown men, the whole company could not be much leſs than two millions: an immenſe increaſe from ſeventy perſons, in but a little more than 200 years!

V. 38. *A mixed multitude*, &c.] Some probably would leave Egypt becauſe it was deſolated, others becauſe they were diſtreſſed or diſcontented; others out of curioſity to ſee what would become of Iſrael, and how they would ſerve the Lord; and perhaps a few, out of cordial love to them and their religion. But theſe were few indeed; for the bulk of this mixed multitude became a ſnare to them, (*Num.* xi. 4,) and probably after a time returned into Egypt. Theſe typify ſuch, as in all ages outwardly adhere to, but are not really of, the Church of God.—Their cattle ſeem to have been the only property, which they poſſeſſed in Egypt, and which the Lord had lately cauſed exceedingly to increaſe.

V. 40. *Four*, &c.] From the firſt calling of Abraham to the departure out of Egypt ſeems to have been exactly 430 years: The Septuagint reads it, 'the ſojourning of 'Iſrael,—in Egypt and in the land of Caanan.' But this is no more than a comment, though a juſt one.

V. 41. *The hoſts*, &c.] The Lord's armies, enliſted under his banner, and marching at his command.

V. 45. *A foreigner*, &c.] That is, until he be circumciſed. This teaches us, that without the circumciſion of the heart, or "being born of the Spirit," we can receive no benefit from the ſacrifice of Chriſt: and although, not being able to ſee this circumciſion of the heart, except in it's outward effects, we cannot make it the rule of admiſſion to the ſacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper; yet men ſhould "*examine themſelves*" reſpecting it, "and ſo eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 *Cor.* xi. 28.)

V. 46. *Neither ſhall ye break a bone*, &c.] (*John*, xix. 36.)

V. 48. *All his males*, &c.] A man was not allowed to eat of the paſſover, till all the males, under his authority, were circumciſed as well as himſelf: for we muſt uſe our influence to promote attendance upon God's ordinances in our families.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord makes all things new to thoſe, whom he delivers from the bondage of Satan, and takes to himſelf to be his peculiar people; and the æra of their enlargement

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49 One law ſhall be to him that is home-born, and unto the ſtranger that ſojourneth among you.

50 Thus did all the children of Iſrael; as the LORD commanded Moſes and Aaron, ſo did they.

51 And it came to paſs the ſelf-ſame day, *that* the LORD did bring the children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt, by their armies.

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is the commencement to them of a new life, of new hopes, pleaſures, and employments: and on the other hand we ſhall do well, if we begin every year, and every day with the ſervice of God. Happy they, who begin their lives with it, by remembering their Creator in the days of their youth. Whatever religious ordinance we are engaged in, we ſhould in due time and manner engage our families alſo in it: nor is any thing more honourable to God, or more profitable to men, than harmonious family religion: it is the beſt bond of domeſtic peace, the beſt ſolace of domeſtic afflictions, and the beſt ſecurity for the continuance and increaſe of domeſtic felicity; whilſt it affords an important advantage for conſtant growth in grace, and the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. But in all our attendance on religious ordinances, ſecret, ſocial, or public, we muſt take heed and beware of this leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy. This is generally connected with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, and often with that of covetouſneſs; which corrupt our ſervices, and render them an abomination unto a holy, heart-ſearching God. (*Iſai.* i. 10—17. lxvi. 3, 4. *Matt.* xxiii. 14—35.) Whatever we offer unto the Lord, or employ in his ſervice, muſt be the beſt of the kind. (*Mal.* i. 14.)—It is our bounden duty to attend upon all the appointments of God, and to endeavour ourſelves to underſtand, that we may explain to our children, the intention of every part: who ought therefore to be encouraged in their enquiries, and informed by clear and ſatisfactory anſwers; that, in the moſt eaſy and agreeable manner, they may become acquainted with the word and works of God, and join with us in celebrating the praiſes of his truth and mercy, and the wonders of his powerful arm. But though we muſt attend upon every ordinance of God; yet upon every one in it's *ſtated* order and ſeaſon: and though we may not proudly neglect, or deſpiſe any of his appointments, leſt we be cut off from the privileges of the Iſrael of God; yet we may properly take time for ſerious enquiry, and conſcientious preparation, that we may at length with more ſolemnity, and to better purpoſe attend on them.—When the Lord's time comes to perform his promiſes, mountains ſhall melt and flow down at his preſence, and nothing ſhall create any more difficulty, than is proper to illuſtrate his powerful operation.—As the greateſt and proudeſt ſinner is not exalted out of the reach of his omnipotent vengeance; ſo the leaſt are not beneath his notice: and if a *temporal* calamity filled Egypt with ſuch terror and lamentation; what will be the conſternation of the wicked at the approaching judgment day! For fear of impending death, the Egyptians were willing to part not only with their bond-ſlaves, but with their gold and ſilver: "What "then ſhall a man be profited, if he gain the whole "world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man "give in exchange for his ſoul?" (*Matt.* xvi. 26.) Alas! riches will not profit in the day of wrath; it coſts more to redeem ſouls from deſtruction: yet if we would eſcape, we muſt moderate our worldly attachments, give up all our ſinful projects, and hold ourſelves in continual readineſs to leave all and follow Chriſt: and if we ſhould be called to part with, not only our wealth, but every temporal comfort; the perfect freedom of his ſervice will give a reliſh to our mean and unſavoury proviſions. But his blood is the only ranſom for our ſouls: without the ſhedding of it there could have been no remiſſion; without the ſprinkling of it there can be no ſalvation. Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us: but have we, by faith in his name, ſheltered our ſouls from the deſerved vengeance of God, under the protection of his atoning blood? Do we keep cloſe to him in the exerciſe of habitual dependence on his merits, and acceſs to the throne of Grace through his interceſſion? Do we ſo profeſs our faith in, and our obligations to, the Redeemer, that all, who paſs by, may know, as by the blood-beſprinkled door, to whom we belong? Are we careful not to abuſe, or diſgrace, this our profeſſion by any inconſiſtent conduct, leſt we ſhould trample the blood of the covenant under our feet? Is Chriſt indeed, in his purchaſed bleſſings, the food and feaſt of our ſouls? Do we feed upon *him* in our hearts by faith with thankſgiving, deriving all our life, ſtrength, hope, and conſolation from his fulneſs of truth and grace? Do we receive him in his whole character, and for *all* the purpoſes of ſalvation, from wrath, from ſin, from this evil world, and from the powers of darkneſs? Do we in conſequence ſtand prepared for his ſervice, and prompt to walk in his ways, to ſeparate ourſelves from his enemies, and aſſert that liberty, with which he makes his people free? Theſe are queſtions of vaſt importance to our ſouls, the Lord direct our conſciences to give an honeſt anſwer. Without the daily exerciſe of godly ſorrow and true repentance, we can never eat of this paſſover; we muſt alſo bear our croſs, and have our feaſt alloyed by the bitter herbs of tribulation and temptation; yet ſhall we find the life of faith and grace a feaſt indeed, a ſource of joy, ſuch as the world can neither give, nor take away.—Finally the Lord's Supper is our unbloody paſſover, our feaſt upon the ſacrifice, our ſacrifice itſelf of praiſe and thankſgiving. Having previouſly examined ourſelves, whether we be in the faith, and ſeriouſly as ſinners applied to the Lord Jeſus for his ſalvation, and devoted ourſelves to his ſervice; let us frequently and conſtantly, in this appointed way, remember our Redeemer's love and ſufferings; let us make this confeſſion of our ſins, this profeſſion of our faith, this declaration of our gratitude, and this ſurrender of ourſelves to his ſervice, as "bought with a price to glorify him, both "in body and ſpirit which are his." Thus uniting ourſelves to, and having fellowſhip with, him and his people here, we ſhall receive from his fulneſs, rejoice in his ways on earth, and at length ſit down with him in his heavenly kingdom.

CHAP

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord's command to Israel to sanctify the first-born to him, with some further instructions concerning the feast of unleavened bread, and orders to explain both these institutions to their children, v. 1—16. 2d. The care of the Lord in the way by which he led the Israelites, and in his guidance of them by the pillar of cloud and of fire; with their taking of Joseph's bones along with them, v. 17—22.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it *is* mine.

3 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place:* there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

4 This day came ye out, in the month Abib.

5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

6 Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt.

9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee,

12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix: and every firstling that cometh of a beast, which thou hast, the males *shall be* the LORD's.

13 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2. *Sanctify*, &c.] In remembrance of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, both man and beast, and the preservation of those of Israel, and of their deliverance out of bondage by means of that judgment, the first-born males of the Israelites were solemnly presented and dedicated to the Lord, and a price appointed to be paid for their redemption. By this it was also represented to them, that the preservation of their lives, when others were, and they justly might have been destroyed, was vouchsafed them through the ransom of the atonement, which in due time was to be made for sin: and that they ought to consider their lives, thus ransomed from death, as now consecrated to the service of God.—The whole assembly of the Lord's people are "the church of the first-born." (*Heb.* xii. 23:) Their lives are continued, their souls are saved from destruction, and they are made heirs of God, through the ransom of the blood of Christ: thus rescued by his sacrifice, from being sacrifices to the justice of God which they had offended they are required to present their bodies a living sacrifice, to be devoted to his service. (*Rom.* xii. 1, 2.)

V. 7. *Neither*, &c.] The Jews were very careful in searching every corner of their houses, that no leaven might remain in them; and what they found, they burnt, buried, or otherwise destroyed, before the feast of the passover.—Thus careful should we be to discover and mortify our sins, to avoid and watch against temptations, and to prepare our hearts for attendance on God's ordinances.

V. 9. *A sign*, &c.] The constant and frequent observance of these institutions, with plain and easy explications of their meaning, would render the deliverance from Egypt familiar to the Israelites; and be a continual memorial, as well as an open profession, of their obligations to love and serve the Lord: as those persons who wish to remember, and fear to forget any thing, use a variety of signs to remind them. Inscribing any thing upon the hand, placing it before their eyes, or as a frontlet upon their foreheads, seem to have been used in those times for such purposes. In like manner Baptism and the Lord's Supper, if thus explained and attended to, would render the nature of Christianity, and the obligations of Christians, familiar

13 And every firſtling of an aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou ſhalt break his neck: and all the firſt-born of man amongſt thy children ſhalt thou redeem.

14 And it ſhall be when thy ſon aſketh thee in time to come, ſaying, What *is* this? that thou ſhalt ſay unto him, By ſtrength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the houſe of bondage.

15 And it came to paſs when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD ſlew all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, both the firſt-born of man, and the firſt-born of beaſt: therefore I ſacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firſt-born of my children I redeem.

16 And it ſhall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by ſtrength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

17 And it came to paſs when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philiſtines, although that *was* near: for God ſaid, Leſt peradventure the people repent when they ſee war, and they return to Egypt.

18 But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderneſs of the Red ſea: and the children of Iſrael went up harneſſed out of the land of Egypt.

19 And Moſes took the bones of Joſeph with him: for he had ſtraitly ſworn the children of Iſrael, ſaying, God will ſurely viſit you; and ye ſhall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderneſs.

21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: to go by day and night.

22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

CHAP.

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miliar to our minds, and remind us, or give us occaſion to remind one another, of our profeſſion and of our duty.

V. 13. *Redeem*, &c.] The firſtlings of ſuch beaſts as were not uſed in ſacrifice, were required either to be exchanged for ſuch as were, or to be deſtroyed.—Our ſouls being forfeited to God's juſtice, unleſs ranſomed by the ſubſtituted ſacrifice of Chriſt, will certainly periſh.

V. 17. *Although*, &c.] It was only a few days march by the neareſt road from Egypt to Canaan: But the Philiſtines were a hardy warlike people; and the Iſraelites were unarmed, diſpirited by long bondage, and not acquainted with war: they were therefore not prepared to encounter them, and would have been greatly diſcouraged if reduced to a neceſſity of ſo doing. This was one reaſon, and probably the avowed reaſon, why the Lord led them another way; but he had others, which will be ſpeedily unfolded.

V. 18. *But God led*, &c.] At the expreſs command of God, the Iſraelites took their rout, much more to the ſouth than the direct road lay, and ſo marched towards the banks of the Red Sea; inſtead of making for the iſthmus of Suez, which communicates betwixt Africa and Aſia.—The margin of the Bible intimates that the word, tranſlated *harneſſed*, ſignifies "by five in a rank;" but the room ſuch a multitude muſt have taken from the van to the rear, is immenſe, had they marched in this manner: it ſeems rather to mean that they marched in five diſtinct ſquadrons. The Septuagint renders it, "in the fifth ge-"neration;" but that ſeems erroneous: for it was in the fourth generation from Levi, who went down with Jacob into Iſrael, and more than the fifth from Abraham. (*Gen.* xv. 16. *Exod.* vi. 18—20.) The Pſalmiſt informs us, that "there was not one feeble perſon amongſt "their tribes." (*Pſalm* cv. 37.) This was a very extraordinary circumſtance, which the hiſtory of the world cannot parallel; yet was very ſuitable to *their* ſituation, who had ſufficient incumbrances in their march, without having a number of invalids to take care of: it alſo completed their triumph over Pharaoh and the Egyptians; when they were not conſtrained to leave one of their company behind them.

V. 19. *Moſes took*, &c.] Theſe bones had been long a pledge of Iſrael's deliverance; and were a proper memento to Moſes, what the greateſt of men muſt ſhortly come to: and in their hurry they were not forgotten.

V. 21. *Pillar*, &c.] This ſymbol of the divine preſence would be peculiarly uſeful to the Iſraelites; as it afforded them light by night, and was a ſhade to them by day; and both by day and night, it was a guide and a pledge of the divine protection.—This pillar typified the guidance, protection, comfort, and ſecurity, which the Lord affords his true people, from the time when they firſt renounce the ſervice of ſin and Satan, until they ſafely arrive in heaven. The Church, being then in its infancy, was ſpoken to by theſe ſenſible tokens in its own language: but we now walk by faith, not by ſight, and may be aſſured of the Lord's preſence, though we have not ſuch external ſymbols of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

So unteachable are we in divine things, that we need to be taught the ſame leſſons over and over, and in a variety of different ways, before we make any tolerable proficiency in them: and repetitions are therefore neither impertinent nor uſeleſs. The tendency of the teachings

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. The Lord directing the march of Israel as most tended to harden Pharaoh's heart, v. 1—4. 2d. Pharaoh pursuing, and overtaking the Israelites, v. 5—9. 3d. Their terror and murmurs, and the encouragement given them by Moses, v. 10—14. 4th. God giving orders to Moses about dividing the Red sea, v. 15—18. 5th. The cloud removing, and stationed betwixt Israel and the Egyptians; the Red sea divided; the Israelites marching through it; the Egyptians following, terrified, and overwhelmed; and Israel preserved and suitably affected, v. 19—31.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them, and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

5 And it was told the king of Egypt, that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and

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of God in his word, is to make his truths and precepts very plain and familiar to our minds, that we may have them continually in view, be frequently conversing about them, and regulating our conduct by them: the same therefore should be the aim of the minister in teaching his people; and of the parent in teaching his children.

By creation we are the Lord's property, and he has a right to dispose of us as he pleases: but redemption gives him a new and more endearing title to our bodies, souls, and services. Our exemption from the desolations of the wicked, and our deliverance from the malice of our enemies flow from the Lord's mercy, through the ransom of the Redeemer's blood, and by the power of his mighty arm: thus purchased, and thus delivered, we are sanctified to his service who has rescued us from destruction: nor shall we ourselves ever enjoy so much liberty, or our children and substance afford us so much comfort, as when we are all most unreservedly devoted to God. "The "strong man," armed with our lusts and passions, our inveterate habits and intimate evil connections, vehemently opposes our conversion, and "will hardly let us go:" but "when a stronger than he comes upon him, he takes "from him his armour wherein he trusted, and divides "the spoil." Then being delivered from thraldom, the leaven of iniquity, once pleasant to us, is thrown aside, and we learn to feast upon that unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, of piety and purity, which once we relished not. The Lord will then proportion our difficulties to the strength which he gives, and so order every thing in his providence, as may most effectually keep us from returning back to sin and the world. Through all the intricacies and dangers of the way, he will guide and guard us by his word, and Spirit: he will enlighten every one of our dark nights of affliction, and shelter us from the burning sun of temptation, until he bring us to his heavenly rest with everlasting songs of joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 2. *Turn*, &c.] The Israelites had not before this marched the direct road to Canaan, but more to the south, towards the Red sea; until they came to the edge of the wilderness, whither the Egyptians expected they were retiring to offer their sacrifices to the Lord. (xiii. 20.) But now they received orders to turn still further out of the road, into some impervious straits, or other difficult places, where they would seem to be so entangled, that they could not possibly escape.

V. 3. *For Pharaoh*, &c.] It was avowedly the Lord's intention to harden the heart of Pharaoh; and he well knew how to effect it, without being in any sense the author of his sin. He only needed to remove all restraints from his heart and conscience; leave him entirely to his own headstrong impetuous lusts, and to the instigations of Satan; and order the dispensations of his providence, as most effectually to inspire him with hopes of yet prevailing in the contest. The proud heart of Pharaoh had been sorely galled, but was not in the least humbled: he had been repeatedly baffled and frighted, and forced to yield; yet his indignant spirit was not subdued, but revolted against the violence which had been put upon him, was fired with resentment, and thirsted for revenge: his covetousness and ambition had been severely disappointed; his kingdom had been desolated and almost depopulated, and his first-born son slain: he had suffered an ignominious defeat; and nothing but despair of success, and the urgent terror of death, could have extorted his consent to Israel's enlargement.—Whilst under the immediate pressure of the last dreadful visitation, every thing, except the preservation of his life, was forgotten. But when his terror and anguish were somewhat subsided, his convictions abated; and the thoughts of the mortifications, ignominy, and loss which he had sustained, with all their probable or possible effects, would rush into his mind. Then every thing would be welcome, which could point out the way, or inspire the hope, of reducing Israel, or of wreaking his vengeance upon them. Had they marched directly towards Canaan, they would probably have been out of his dominions before he had recovered from his fright, and he might have given them up in despair: but as they turned another way, and were as he supposed entangled in the wilderness,

and

and of his ſervants was turned againſt the people, and they ſaid, Why have we done this, that we have let Iſrael go from ſerving us?

6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him.

7 And he took ſix hundred choſen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he purſued after the children of Iſrael: and the children of Iſrael went out with an high hand.

9 But the Egyptians purſued after them, (all the horſes *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horſemen and army,) and he overtook them encamping by the ſea, beſide Pi-hahiroth before Baal-zephon.

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Iſrael lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were ſore afraid: and the children of Iſrael cried out unto the LORD.

11 And they ſaid unto Moſes, Becauſe *there were* no graves in Egypt, haſt thou taken us away to die in the wilderneſs? Wherefore haſt thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

12 *Is* not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, ſaying, Let us alone, that we may ſerve the Egyptians? For *it had been* better for us to ſerve the Egyptians, than that we ſhould die in the wilderneſs.

13 And Moſes ſaid unto the people, Fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the LORD, which he will ſhew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have ſeen to-day ye ſhall ſee them again no more for ever.

14 The LORD ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall hold your peace.

15 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Wherefore crieſt thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they go forward.

16 But lift thou up thy rod, and ſtretch out thine hand over the ſea, and divide it: and the children of Iſrael ſhall go on dry-ground through the midſt of the ſea.

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and ſhut up by ſurrounding rocks, mountains, and ſeas; he would conclude that they were not under an infallible guidance, and thence infer that they were not under Almighty protection, but might yet be ſubdued to his will. What he ardently wiſhed feeble evidence would induce him to believe, and every paſſion of his heart favoured the concluſion which he drew from theſe circumſtances.—This the Lord foreſaw; and that he might be honoured upon the Egyptians, and make his power and juſtice known among them, he gave theſe orders unto the Iſraelites.

V. 5. *That the*, &c.] Though the Egyptians had conſented to, and urged, the departure of the Iſraelites, and certainly expected them to return no more; yet that had not been mentioned: when therefore they ſtopped not to offer ſacrifices, but marched forward, eſpecially in that intricate road, they termed it a flight.—Some of Pharaoh's ſervants had counſelled him to diſmiſs Iſrael: yet now conſidering themſelves ſharers in his loſs and diſgrace, and being again encouraged to expect better ſucceſs; they blamed themſelves for having let them go, and gave Pharaoh more agreeable advice, which, however, forwarded his deſtruction.

V. 8. *With*, &c.] The Iſraelites at firſt were in high ſpirits, and ſeemed very courageouſly to ſet the Egyptians at defiance.

V. 9. *Beſide Pi-hahiroth*, &c.] It is generally ſuppoſed that on the right and left of this encampment were impaſſible mountains or fortifications; whilſt the Red ſea was in the front of Iſrael, and Pharaoh with his army preſſed upon their rear. The Red ſea is ſuppoſed by ſome perſons, to have been in this place between fifteen, and twenty miles acroſs: but we cannot obtain any exact knowledge in this reſpect.

V. 10. *Cried out*, &c.] Some of the people cried out unto the Lord, whilſt others vented their trouble in complaints againſt Moſes.

V. 11. *Becauſe*, &c.] Theſe murmurers were ſenſible that ſuch an unarmed multitude could not withſtand Pharaoh's diſciplined army: they had no thoughts therefore of fighting, no proſpect of eſcaping by flight, no hope in ſubmitting to ſuch an enraged tyrant; and no confidence in, or expectation from, the Lord:—ſo that death ſeemed inevitable. They therefore ſpake, as if Moſes had of himſelf brought them out of Egypt. Pharaoh in mad preſumption, and they in unbelieving deſpondency, had alike forgotten the wonderful works of God, which they had witneſſed.

V. 13. *Stand ſtill*, &c.] Moſes, in the exerciſe of faith, poſſeſſed admirable preſence of mind; and encouraged the people to keep their ground, and not to put themſelves into any diſorder, but to expect the Lord's interpoſition, and to hold themſelves in readineſs to obey his orders.

V. 15. *Wherefore*, &c.?] Moſes was earneſt in prayer at this trying conjuncture; and we ought not to ſuppoſe that the Lord was diſpleaſed with him: but he thus aſſured him, that his requeſt was granted, that he was about to effect their deliverance; and that he had nothing to do, but to excite and encourage the people to march forward; and he would clear the way for them, in an unexpected and unheard-of manner.

17 And

THE REVᵈ Mᴿ SCOTT'S BIBLE.

EXODUS. CH.XIV. VE.XXVII.

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17 And I, behold I, will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they ſhall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hoſt, upon his chariots, and upon his horſemen.

18 And the Egyptians ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horſemen.

19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Iſrael, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and ſtood behind them.

20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Iſrael; and it was a cloud of darkneſs *to them*, but it gave light by night *to theſe:* ſo that the one came not near the other all the night.

21 And Moſes ſtretched out his hand over the ſea, and the LORD cauſed the ſea to go *back* by a ſtrong eaſt-wind all that night, and made the ſea dry-land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Iſrael went into the midſt of the ſea upon the dry-ground: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians purſued, and went in after them, to the midſt of the ſea, *even* all Pharaoh's horſes, his chariots, and his horſemen.

24 And it came to paſs that in the morning-watch the LORD looked unto the hoſt of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the hoſt of the Egyptians,

25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: ſo that the Egyptians ſaid, Let us flee from the face of Iſrael; for the LORD fighteth for them againſt the Egyptians.

26 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Stretch out thine hand over the ſea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horſemen.

27 And Moſes ſtretched forth his hand over the ſea, and the ſea returned to his ſtrength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled againſt it: and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midſt of the ſea.

28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horſemen, *and* all the hoſt of Pharaoh that came into the ſea after them: there remained not ſo much as one of them.

29 But the children of Iſrael walked upon dry-land in the midſt of the ſea: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD ſaved Iſrael that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Iſrael ſaw the Egyptians dead upon the ſea-ſhore.

V. 17. *I, behold I,* &c.] This ſpeaks the certainty of the event, as the Lord himſelf undertook for it, that the heart of Pharaoh and of his ſubjects ſhould be hardened: they had aſſociated themſelves with him in rebellion, and were thus with him doomed to the ſame deſerved puniſhment.

V. 18. *The Egyptians.*] That is, the miſerable remains of this once flouriſhing people.

V. 19. *The angel,* &c.] Either a created angel, by whoſe miniſtry this pillar of cloud and of fire was produced, and moved; or, Chriſt the Angel of Jehovah's preſence; (24.)

V. 20. *It was a cloud,* &c.] Even in the night the cloud cauſed an additional gloom to diſmay the Egyptians; yet at the ſame time it was a light to direct the ſteps of the Iſraelites.—Evey diſpenſation of providence, and every part of Scripture has a dark ſide for the enemies, and a bright ſide for the people of the Lord.—The Iſraelites marched forward to the brink of the Red ſea, and the Egyptians purſued them: and though the latter deemed themſelves ſecure of their prey, yet were ſo bewildered in the darkneſs, as not to able to ſeize upon it.

V. 21. *To go back,* &c.] At the ſtretching forth of Moſes' hand, and the waving of his conſecrated rod, the Lord cauſed a ſtrong eaſt wind to blow. This was only the ſignal, by which he anſwered that of Moſes; and then by his power He divided the waters, till they wonderfully formed two mighty walls, and a ſpacious road betwixt, through which the Iſraelites ſecurely marched!

V. 22, 23.] The people boldly marched on in the path thus opened for them, encouraged outwardly by the word of Moſes, but inwardly by the power of God.—Whilſt the Egyptians, being given up to deſperate hardneſs of heart, without fear followed the example.—Some, however, think, that, bewildered by the darkneſs, and hearing the Iſraelites before them, they were not aware that they had entered the channel of the ſea, till it was too late to eſcape.

V. 24. *Looked unto thee,* &c.] The Lord terrified the Egyptians by ſomething which they ſaw and heard, or by a powerful operation upon their minds.

V. 25. *Took off their,* &c.] The Lord ſo ordered it, that they could not get forward; we need not enquire in what manner.

V. 30. *Dead,* &c.] The Egyptians were eminent for the art of embalming the dead, and all their grandees had formerly been thus diſtinguiſhed: but the Lord now poured contempt upon them, and denied them even burial!

31 And Iſrael ſaw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his ſervant Moſes.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. The ſong of Moſes and of the Iſraelites, on account of their late deliverance, v. 1—21. 2d. Their march in the wilderneſs, and want of water; the bitter waters of Marah, their murmurs, Moſes' prayer, the Lord's anſwer, the waters made ſweet, his charge and promiſe to them; their arrival and encampment at Elim, v. 22—27.

THEN ſang Moſes and the children of Iſrael this ſong unto the LORD, and ſpake, ſaying, I will ſing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed glorioufly; the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the ſea.

2 The

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord, in all his commands and diſpenſations will make trial of men's ſpirits; and every thing will eventually co-operate to harden the hearts of obſtinate rebels to their deſtruction, and to exerciſe and increaſe the faith of his people: that by making known the glories of his name, he may be honoured *by* the one, and *upon* the other. Would we therefore eſcape the awful ſentence of being judicially hardened, we ſhould take care not to harden our own hearts in ſin, when called upon to repent and ſubmit ourſelves to God; for none are thus puniſhed, who have not *righteouſly* deſerved it.—Herein conſiſts the excellency and benefit of *faith*, that it gives the Lord credit for his wiſdom, faithfulneſs, and love, even where they are not diſcernible; and expects the accompliſhment of his promiſes in the unreſerved obedience to his commandments, however contrary to the ſuggeſtions of human policy; and remains ſatisfied that the event will clear up every difficulty.—Unleſs the heart be truly humbled, and ſin of every kind hated out of love to God and holineſs, no religious impreſſions will be abiding. Under remorſe of conſcience, the ſmart of ſufferings, and the terrors of impending deſtruction, and whilſt temptations are out of ſight, ſinful propenſities appear to be ſlain: but they will ſoon revive, when there is reſpite, when convictions wear off, when terrors ſubſide, and temptations return; and will only rage with redoubled force, for having received a temporary check: forgetfulneſs of the paſt will ſoon intervene, and the heart grow harder than ever in bold preſumption; till given up of God, and infatuated by Satan, ſuch perſons will even be aſhamed and repent of their conſtrained repentance, and impetuouſly ruſh upon their own deſtruction. Such is the progreſs of thoſe who rebel againſt the light, and encourage one another in wickedneſs, until they are involved in one common ruin. Let us fear leſt we alſo ſhould be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin.—How dark do all the counſels and truths of God appear to thoſe, who are thus fighting againſt him! Even his very Goſpel becomes to them a ſavour of death unto death! (2 *Cor.* ii. 15, 16.) Who then can ſtand before him, who hath all creatures at his command! And how dreadful will that day be, when the wicked ſhall be overwhelmed in the depths of hell, yea all the nations that forget God! But men are not only prone preſumptuouſly to forget the works of God, and his threatened deſtruction of the wicked, but alſo in deſpondency to forget his wonders of love and promiſes of deliverance to his people: and in large companies even of his profeſſed worſhippers, there will be many deſtitute of faith and grace. Theſe in times of trial, when others are crying to the Lord for help, will be venting their impatience and rebellion againſt God, by quarrelling with his ſervants; and will often diſcourage others, and lead them to mingle unbelieving murmurs and peeviſh complaints, with their prayers and ſupplications; and for a time to forget all their former experience and obſervation of the Lord's power and love. And indeed it is very common, when men meet with unexpected difficulties in their firſt entrance upon a religious life, or upon any particular ſervice, that they are tempted to wiſh they had never gone about it, or to utter expreſſions equally unreaſonable and ſinful.—But the Lord pities and pardons thoſe, who are upright in heart; and makes uſe of the faith and courage of ſome, to animate and quicken others: and if we belong to him, and march forward in the path of duty, depending on him and calling upon him; he will ſurely open a way for us, through difficulties and obſtacles, as inſurmountable as mountains and ſeas.—For when we ſee no poſſible method of eſcape, or of ſucceſs, and have none other to look to but the Lord; then we are prepared to receive deliverance from him in a proper manner, to be ſuitably affected with it, and to give him all the glory. But there is more difficulty to prevail with man to uſe the means of ſalvation, than with God to bleſs the means, he appoints; and to find a *willing* people to welcome a *willing* Saviour. (*Pſalm* cx. 3.) This alſo he effects in the day of his power; and under his guidance and protection, enlightened by his Word and Spirit, his true Iſrael wait for his ſalvation; from time to time on earth, they are delivered from their enemies, for the encouragement of their faith and hope, and for their incitement to obedience, and that they may be aſhamed of their impatience and diſtruſt: and at laſt they ſhall witneſs the final deſtruction of all oppoſers with ſongs of grateful praiſe.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1. *Then ſang Moſes.* &c.] Doubtleſs Moſes compoſed this ſong by divine inſpiration, and inſtructed the people thus to expreſs their gratitude and joy; and to celebrate the Lord's praiſes on account of their late deliverance, for his glory and for their own encouragement. The capacity for poetry and muſic, and for being delighted with them, however abuſed through the ſinfulneſs of the human heart, is no more the effect of that ſinfulneſs, than the other capacities of the ſoul, or

2 The LORD *is* my ſtrength and ſong, and he is become my ſalvation: he *is* my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers' God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his hoſts hath he caſt into the ſea: his choſen captains alſo are drowned in the Red ſea.

5 The depths have covered them: they ſank into the bottom as a ſtone.

6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath daſhed in pieces the enemy.

7 And in the greatneſs of thine excellency thou haſt overthrown them that roſe up againſt thee: thou ſenteſt forth thy wrath, *which* conſumed them as ſtubble.

8 And with the blaſt of thy noſtrils the waters were gathered together: the floods ſtood upright as an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the ſea.

9 The enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil: my luſt ſhall

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or the members of the body, which are alſo in like manner often proſtituted to the ſervice of ſin. Having been implanted by God himſelf in human nature, they ought to be employed in his ſervice, and conſecrated to his glory. Accordingly hymns, or ſongs of praiſe, were compoſed under the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, and form a conſiderable portion of the ſacred Scripture: ſome of them were ſuited to particular occaſions; and were at the time ſung by the congregation of the Lord, as an act of public worſhip; and afterwards in commemoration of thoſe events, and in accommodation to other circumſtances with which they might accord. Others ſeem to be of more general deſignation, and naturally ſuit the experiences, and expreſs the affections, of true believers in all ages. The poetry of theſe ſacred hymns has been carefully inveſtigated, and much admired by many perſons of eminent attainments in ancient learning; and allowed to be in many reſpects ſuperior to all other remains of antiquity; eſpecially by Dr. Lowth, the late Biſhop of London, in his "*Prælectiones*," &c. This ſong of Moſes is the moſt ancient compoſition of the kind extant in the world; and it was ſung by Moſes, and the congregation of the Iſraelitiſh men; whilſt Miriam led the women to accompany them, not only with ſinging, but alſo with timbrels and dances. Mr. Henry obſerves, that this proves pſalm-ſinging to be more ancient than the ceremonial law, and therefore no part of it: It proves the ſame alſo concerning the uſe of inſtrumental muſic in the worſhip of God, and even of religious dances. Whether, *rebus ſic ſtantibus*, either the one, or the other tend to the glory of God and the edification of men, and therefore whether either of them ought to be retained, or both excluded from the worſhip of the New Teſtament Church, is another queſtion: but it ſeems evident that they form no part of the ceremonial law, and are neither commanded nor prohibited in the Scripture; though we have examples for them in the Old Teſtament, and none for them in the New. Upon ſuch points godly perſons will differ in their judgments; but it is well when, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace," they differ with meekneſs and in love.—There had been a long conteſt betwixt the king of Egypt and the God of Iſrael, but now it was undeniably terminated, and the God of Iſrael had got a complete victory over Egypt and her king, and over her gods alſo.

V. 2. *The Lord*, &c.] Iſrael depended entirely upon Jehovah for victory over their potent foes, and protection againſt them; he was now become their ſalvation, and they celebrated his praiſes in their ſong. All this typifies the dependence, ſalvation, triumph, and praiſe of the true Church of God, and of every true believer, over their ſpiritual enemies. (*Rev.* xv. 3.)—Jehovah is the object of the believer's love, worſhip, obedience, and dependence, from whom he expects happineſs, and to whom he devotes himſelf.—This Iſrael in general, and every Iſraelite in particular, was taught to profeſs; and to ſubjoin the purpoſe of preparing him an habitation; referring to the tabernacle, and temple, which were types of the human nature of Chriſt, the true temple, "in whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the "godhead bodily," and in which he diſplays his glory, "as "reconciling the world unto himſelf." Through him alſo the believer's heart is a temple, in which he delights to dwell, "an habitation of God through the Spirit." (*Iſ.* lxvi. 1, 2. *John* ii. 19—21. 2 *Cor.* v. 19. *Eph.* ii. 22. *Col.* ii. 9.)—The Lord had alſo manifeſtly ſhewn himſelf to be the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, by fulfilling the promiſes he had made to them.

V. 3. *The Lord*, &c.] Jehovah had acted as a renowned warrior and conqueror, whoſe atchievements ought to be celebrated in ſacred ſongs of praiſe: as thoſe of the heathen conquerors were in their *profane poems*; emphatically ſo called, whilſt they aſcribe the honours due to God to ſome vile ambitious cruel man.

V. 6. *Glorious*, &c.] Or *thy hand* is "*glorified in* "*power:*" All men would ſee and admire the greatneſs and power of God, as glorified in the deſtruction of Pharaoh.

V. 7. *Excellency.*] Not only excelling in power, but excellent in juſtice, wiſdom, truth, and goodneſs.

V. 8. *The blaſt of*, &c.] The wind is by a ſtrong metaphor called, "the blaſt of the Lord's noſtrils," being the token and in ſome ſenſe the inſtrument, of dividing the Red ſea; as well for the purpoſe of executing vengeance upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as of effecting the deliverance of Iſrael.—The waters deep before, but now made much deeper on each ſide the road, on which Iſrael marched; ſtood as if petrified into ſolid rocks.

V. 9. *The enemy ſaid*, &c.] This verſe moſt poetically

shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, amongst the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?

12 Thou stretchest out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.

13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people *which* thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided *them* in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

14 The people shall hear *and* be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.

15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.

16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be *as* still as a stone: till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, *which* thou hast purchased.

17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* thou hast made for thee to dwell in: *in* the sanctuary, O LORD, *which* thy hands have established.

18 The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots, and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry-land in the midst of the sea.

20 And Miriam the propheteſs, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances.

21 And

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cally describes the rage, pride, and presumption of Pharaoh and of the Egyptians; and confirms what was spoken upon that subject in the foregoing chapter. Whilst the next verse, with inimitable simplicity and sublimity, describes the infinite ease, with which they were checked, and overwhelmed in the sea.

V. 11. *Amongst the gods*, &c.] The objects of the idolatrous worship of the Egyptians and heathens; in and through which Satan proudly affected to be worshipped as the god of this world, and ambitiously rivalled Jehovah, were thus shewn to be wholly unworthy in any respect to be compared to him.—The righteousness, faithfulness, purity, and love, *that is*, the holiness of the divine character, form the essential glory and excellency of Jehovah; and reflect glory upon all the contrivances of his wisdom, and the operations of his almighty power; which, if not devised and performed in holiness, would be tremendous, but not glorious.—Such majesty also and excellency are displayed in the Lord's works of love and mercy, as cannot be suitably admired and praised, without filling the mind with solemn awe and reverential fear.

V. 12. *The earth*, &c.] The dead bodies of many of the Egyptians soon sank to the bottom, and were buried in the sand.

V. 13. *In thy mercy*, &c.] It is here acknowledged, that the deliverance of Israel was as much a display of mercy, as the destruction of the Egyptians was an act of justice. And this redemption from bondage by a miracle was an earnest of their being put in possession of Canaan, which is spoken of as if it had been already accomplished: Canaan seems to be here called the holy habitation of Jehovah, as afterwards (17.) "the mountain of his "inheritance," and "the sanctuary;" because God had chosen it for the place of his future special residence, where he would manifest his presence and love, establish his holy ordinances, and publish his holy word. All this is typical of the believer's merciful redemption from the guilt and bondage of iniquity; and of his being powerfully guided to God's holy habitation in heaven.

V. 14. *Sorrow shall*, &c.] The Philistines had been the objects of terror to Israel; but they now suppose them filled with dismay and anguish at the tidings of this wonderful deliverance: And we may be sure that it would produce very great effects upon all the surrounding nations, for a time at least. The inhabitants of Jericho, forty years after, had not got over the fright which it occasioned. (*Joshua* ii. 9, 10.)

V. 16. *Still*, &c.] These nations would be awed into silence, and be restrained from resistance, by the glory of Jehovah's power and indignation; seeing he had delivered his people at the price of the destruction of so flourishing a country as Egypt. (*Isaiah* xliii. 3.) In this they were a type of "the Church of God, which "he hath purchased with his own blood." (*Acts* xx. 28.)

V. 18. *The Lord*, &c.] In perfect wisdom, justice, and goodness, Jehovah shall reign as the only lawgiver and judge over his willing people, who with joyful hearts shall render him loyal obedience; and he shall finally and eternally crush all his enemies with irresistible force.

V. 20. *Miriam the propheteſs*, &c.] Miriam is mentioned by Micah, as joined with Moses and Aaron in leading forth the people, (*Micah* vi. 4;) and is here called a propheteſs; nothing is recorded of her

21 And Miriam anſwered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriouſly; the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the ſea.

22 So Moſes brought Iſrael from the Red ſea, and they went out into the wilderneſs of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderneſs, and found no water.

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured againſt Moſes, ſaying, What ſhall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the LORD, and the LORD ſhewed him a tree, *which* when he had caſt into the waters, the waters were made ſweet: there he made for them a ſtatute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

26 And ſaid, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his ſight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his ſtatutes; I will put none of theſe diſeaſes upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.

27 And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threeſcore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

CHAP.

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her in that character, but her leading the women in this ſong of praiſe, joined, according to the uſages of the times, with timbrels and dances. She was now about 90 years of age, and is called the ſiſter *of Aaron*, as ſhe probably reſided with him.

V. 23. *They could*, &c.] It ſeems that theſe waters were not only extremely nauſeous, but unwholeſome likewiſe. So great a multitude marching for three days without any water, except they carried ſome ſmall quantity with them, would occaſion great diſtreſs and perhaps diſeaſe: and having found water, but not being able to drink it, they muſt have been greatly diſappointed.

V. 24. *Murmured*, &c.] When the Iſraelites were delivered from the Egyptians, "they feared the Lord, and "believed the Lord, and his ſervant Moſes," as commiſſioned by him, and acting according to his command. "But they ſoon forgat his works." (*Pſalm* cvi. 12, 13,) and began to vent their diſcontent and diſtruſt in peeviſh murmurs againſt Moſes, as if he had acted of himſelf.

V. 25, 26.] The change was not wrought by any natural efficacy of the wood; but it was a token of the Lord's operation; (2 *Kings*, ii. 19—22. iv. 38—41.) It was alſo to be conſidered as a type of the bleſſings of the Goſpel, which Chriſt purchaſed for us when he hung upon the tree: theſe *infuſed*, ſo to ſpeak, into our inward and outward trials, ſweeten them all by peace in the conſcience, comfort in the heart, and the hope of everlaſting glory.—In this place the Lord put the people upon their good behaviour; and whilſt he aſſured them that he would provide for them, and continue their health and comforts if they were obedient, he intimated that if they were rebellious, the very diſeaſes and judgments, which they had ſeen inflicted upon the Egyptians, would come upon them alſo. Perhaps the want of water, and ſome of them having drunk of the unwholeſome waters of Marah, had occaſioned ſickneſs among them, and filled them with apprehenſions, which were thus obviated and over-ruled for good purpoſes.

V. 27. *Twelve*, &c.] A well of water to each tribe, and the palm-trees for a cooling ſhade. It is remarkable that the number anſwers to the twelve patriarchs, and their ſeventy elders; and to the twelve apoſtles, and the ſeventy diſciples.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe events in providence, and thoſe experiences in the life of faith, which have occaſioned our moſt diſtreſſing apprehenſions, are often ſo turned about, as to fill our hearts with gratitude and our mouths with praiſe: nor would the Lord lead thoſe whom he loves into ſuch ſtraits, did he not intend to render them ſubſervient to his own glory, and to their comfort and advantage. When in patience and quietneſs we have waited for deliverance out of trouble, and have had our expectations anſwered, we ſhould proclaim to all around us the wonderful works of God; and every one, in the improvement of his talent, and the exerciſe of his peculiar endowments, ſhould concur in ſo pleaſant and reaſonable a ſervice. They who oppreſs the people of God, are his declared enemies; he will certainly triumph over them completely; and all ſhall acknowledge that he is not only "glorious in power," but "glorious in ho-"lineſs," in their deſtruction, and in that of all impenitent ſinners. But they, who humbly ſubmit to him and truſt in his mercy, will find that he will become their ſalvation, and "compaſs them about with ſongs of deliverance."—What his grace begins, his power and faithfulneſs will complete; and having redeemed them from the bondage of ſin and Satan, every paſt favour becomes an earneſt of further benefits, until he bring them to his holy habitation in heaven.

The judgments inflicted on ſome of God's enemies are evidences that judgment will be executed on the reſt; and he often firſt intimidates thoſe whom he intends to puniſh. Ere long every enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, which hath done evil in his ſanctuary; and the whole church ſhall ſing the ſong of Moſes and of the Lamb, as triumphing over the fall of every antichriſt; and the Lord ſhall reign for ever and ever, to the eternal ſatisfaction of his redeemed people, and the eternal confuſion of his enemies.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. Israel's march into the wilderness of Sin; their being in want of bread, and murmuring: Manna promised, and the people rebuked, v. 1—10. *2d. Manna and quails sent; a description of the manna; rules for gathering it, the disobedience of Israel in hoarding it, and in going out to seek for it on the sabbath day, with the consequences, v.* 11—31. *3d. An omer commanded to be preserved, v.* 32—36.

AND they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you: and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt.

7 And in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: And what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

8 And Moses said, *This shall be* when the LORD

In this world we must pass through many changes: and those praises, which only spring from gratified self-love, will soon be turned into rebellious murmurs. Hypocrites may have a *temporary* faith, and very high affections, and be vastly earnest in religious exercises; but in time of temptation they often fall away: And even true believers, in seasons of sharp trial, will be tempted to fret, distrust, and murmur. But in every dispensation we should cast our care upon the Lord, and pour out our prayers before him; and we shall find that a submissive will, a peaceful conscience, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit, will render the bitterest trial tolerable, yea pleasant. And let us not forget that we are preserved from destruction, and delivered from our enemies, to be the Lord's servants; that he proves us in order to our more unreserved obedience; that our exemption from the afflictions, which others endure, is intended to encourage us in the path of duty; and that *the evidence* of our being interested in his redeeming love, arises from the habitual disposition, of which we are conscious, to keep his commandments. Our health, both of body and soul, depend on the Lord; may he then sanctify our bodily sicknesses, restore our souls to the health of holiness, enable us "to draw water with joy from the "wells of salvation," and "to sit down under his shadow "with great delight, and find his fruit sweet to our taste." (*Sol. Song*, ii. 3. *Isa.* xii. 3.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 3. *By the*, &c.] The Israelites wished they had died by some sudden judgment, as the first-born of Egypt had been slain; and they seemed to envy their speedy death, whilst they considered themselves reserved to a more lingering and painful execution.—They had forgotten all the fatigue and oppression of their bondage; and only remembered and magnified the plenty which they had enjoyed: as if their enslaved condition in Egypt had been a most desirable privilege! And not daring directly to arraign the divine justice, and not feeling disposed to acknowledge the Lord's goodness, they purposely overlooked him, and ascribed the whole transaction to Moses and Aaron; as if they had only intended their destruction, and *that* of the whole congregation: for as they could not themselves see, in what manner they could be victualled, they had no confidence in the power of God to effect it.

V. 4. *I will*, &c.] The manna came down from the upper regions of the air, where it was miraculously produced, and whence it descended in the form of rain, or dew. (Note *Gen.* i. 1.) By this kindness the Lord intended to make a fair trial of the people, whether any reasonable indulgence, or any miraculous interposition, would induce them to obedience.

V. 5. *On the*, &c.] On the day before the sabbath, (which is spoken of in this chapter, as an appointment previously known to Israel,) probably a much larger quantity fell than on other days.

V. 7. *And in the morning*, &c.] The people saw in the evening when the quails came, and in the morning when the manna descended, an additional, miraculous, and merciful proof, that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt; that whilst they beheld the glory of his power and love, in

LORD ſhall give you in the evening fleſh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur againſt him: And what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not againſt us, but againſt the LORD.

9 And Moſes ſpake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to paſs, as Aaron ſpake unto the whole congregation of the children of Iſrael, that they looked toward the wilderneſs, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Iſrael; ſpeak unto them, ſaying, At even ye ſhall eat fleſh, and in the morning ye ſhall be filled with bread: and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

13 And it came to paſs, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the hoſt.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderneſs *there lay* a ſmall round thing, *as* ſmall as the hoar froſt on the ground.

15 And when the children of Iſrael ſaw *it*, they ſaid one to another, It *is* manna: for they wiſt not what it *was*. And Moſes ſaid unto them, This *is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

16 This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating: an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your perſons, take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

17 And the children of Iſrael did ſo, and gathered, ſome more, ſome leſs.

18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating.

19 And Moſes ſaid, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

20 Notwithſtanding they hearkened not unto Moſes, but ſome of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and ſtank: and Moſes was wroth with them.

21 And

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thus ſupplying their wants, they might be ſhamed out of their murmurings and diſtruſt.—They had reflected upon Moſes, as if he were unkind, unjuſt, or unwiſe, in bringing them out of Egypt; but were not aware that they were murmuring againſt God, for HE had brought them forth, and Moſes was but his inſtrument.

V. 10. *The glory of the Lord*, &c.] Some extraordinary ſplendour, which denoted God's ſpecial preſence; and from which he probably ſpake in an audible voice.

V. 12. *Ye ſhall know*, &c.] The people would be convinced, not only that the Lord was able, but that he conſidered himſelf engaged, to protect and provide for them, unleſs they forfeited their privilege by rebellion and apoſtacy.

V. 13. *Quails*, &c.] Theſe were feathered fowl, though it is not certainly known of what ſpecies. (*Pſ.* lxxviii. 27.) Such numbers were miraculouſly brought thither, and lighted amongſt the people, that they caught with eaſe as many as ſufficed for their uſe. We may compare this miracle of mercy to Iſrael, with the miracle of the locuſts which were ſent to devour the ſuſtenance of Egypt.

V. 15. *It is manna*, &c.] The meaning ſeems to be, that the people ſaid, *Man-hu?* or, *What is this?* which thence became the name of it.

V. 16. *Omer.*] About five Engliſh pints: thus much of this extraordinary food they were able to gather for every individual of this vaſt company, every day, for forty years together!

V. 18. *He that*, &c.] This is by ſome interpreted to ſignify, that when the maſter of every family came to mete out to every one his portion, he found that they had one with another gathered as much as was neceſſary, and no more. Yet as ſome endeavoured to hoard the manna, this interpretation ſeems ſcarcely admiſſible; for in this caſe there would have been none for them to have hoarded: nor can we, for the ſame reaſon, admit a miracle to have been wrought in augmenting, or diminiſhing, the quantity which they ſeverally had gathered. But, as the Apoſtle applies this paſſage to Chriſtians imparting their abundance to ſupply the neceſſity of ſuch as were in want, we might interpret the words in this manner; they, who had gathered much, that is more than they wanted, were generally led to impart their ſuperfluity, to make up the deficiency of thoſe who had too little; in confidence of a freſh ſupply the next day. (2 *Cor.* viii. 12—15.) It is, however, generally ſuppoſed, that matters were ſo ordered by the divine interpoſition, that an omer for each was regularly gathered by the perſons of every family, one with another;

21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the ſun waxed hot, it melted.

22 And it came to paſs *that* on the ſixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man:* and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moſes.

23 And he ſaid unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath ſaid, To-morrow *is* the reſt of the holy ſabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to-day*, and ſeethe that ye will ſeethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moſes bade: and it did not ſtink, neither was there any worm therein.

25 And Moſes ſaid, Eat that to-day; for to-day *is* a ſabbath unto the LORD: to-day ye ſhall not find it in the field.

26 Six days ye ſhall gather it; but on the ſeventh day, *which is* the ſabbath, in it there ſhall be none.

27 And it came to paſs *that* there went out *ſome* of the people on the ſeventh day for to gather, and they found none.

28 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, How long refuſe ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the ſabbath, therefore he giveth you on the ſixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the ſeventh day.

30 So the people reſted on the ſeventh day.

31 And the houſe of Iſrael called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander-ſeed, white; and the taſte of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32 And Moſes ſaid, This *is* the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may ſee the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderneſs, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

33 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

34 As the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo Aaron laid it up before the Teſtimony, to be kept.

35 And the children of Iſrael did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited:

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another; and that it was out of this quantity, ſome of them diſtruſtfully attempted to hoard; inſtead of freely uſing it, or imparting it to thoſe who required more, in ſimple dependence on God for the future.

V. 21. *When the ſun*, &c.] This was a very extraordinary circumſtance, that a ſubſtance, which was ſo eaſily diſſolved and exhaled, ſhould be ſufficiently nutrimental, to ſupport the people in health, and vigour, for ſo long a time. They were thus taught to be induſtrious, and to riſe early to their work; and we are taught to ſeek the Lord *early*, without delay, and with diligence.

V. 23. *Bake ye that*, &c.] The Iſraelites were not allowed to kindle any fire on the ſabbath days, (xxxv. 3:) they were therefore required to prepare the manna for uſe on the preceding day, in what manner they choſe; that the religious reſt of that *holy* day might not be interrupted: and after uſing what they wanted the day before, to reſerve that which remained, in what form they pleaſed, for the ſabbath.

V. 24. *It did not ſtink*, &c.] There was a combination, as it were, of miracles wrought every week in honour of the ſabbath, even *before the promulgation of the Moſaic law.* Double the quantity fell the day before; (29;) none fell on the ſabbath day; nor did that ſtink, which they kept for that day: this confirms the ſuppoſition that the inſtitution of the ſabbath was from the beginning.

V. 29. *Hath given you*, &c.] Not the Lord *is about to* appoint, but he *hath given* you the ſabbath: as a ſpecial benefit he hath inſtituted this day of holy reſt for you.

V. 34. *So Aaron laid it up*, &c.] This was done ſome months after; when the ark, the teſtimony of God's preſence with Iſrael, his care of them, and relation to them, was formed and put into the holy of holies. Thus by miracle, the manna, which when kept in diſtruſt ſtank in one night, was preſerved pure from generation to generation.

V. 35. *Did eat manna*, &c.] The manna was a type of Chriſt, "the true Bread, that came down from heaven; provided of God, and given to periſhing ſinners, notwithſtanding their unworthineſs, and their diſpoſition to deſpiſe or undervalue ſo precious a gift. The careleſs multitude underſtand not what this heavenly manna is, or what uſe they are to make of it, till inſtructed that it is the bread which the Lord hath given them. The hypocrite retains the doctrine as a notion, which corrupts and produces pride and vain confidence. The true Chriſtian, having an appetite for this heavenly proviſion, ſeeks it diligently and early, day by day; labours for it though

habited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

36 Now an omer *is* the tenth *part* of an ephah.

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though it be the gift of God; (*John* vi. 27:) and feeds upon it in his heart by faith with thankſgiving; by which his ſoul acquires health and vigour, and he becomes ſtrong to labour and to fight with his enemies. There is a ſufficiency in this proviſion for the whole congregation of Iſrael, but nothing over for any one. We muſt have it freſh, and feed upon it daily, to the end of our journey to the Canaan above; and though it appear to ſome light bread, it will hold out to the end: that is, we muſt by faith receive from Chriſt, as the purchaſe of his ſacrifice, pardon and peace, grace and ſtrength, every day till we come to heaven. And though we now ſeem to gather a double portion on the ſabbath days; yet when we keep our heavenly ſabbath, we ſhall not need to gather any more, nor will the ſtock we have acquired any more corrupt, but in that holy of holies it will preſerve for ever, as proviſion for our ſouls, to the glory of our God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As changes are prepared for us in this world, we ſhould be prepared for them; and be ready to endure hardſhip, and to exerciſe faith, patience, and ſelf-denial, whenever called to it. But before we too ſeverely cenſure others, we ſhould put our ſoul in their ſoul's ſtead: we may eaſily condemn the Iſraelites; but perhaps do not readily ſuſpect, that in much leſs trials, we ſhould diſtruſt, deſpond, and murmur, if we were proved and left to ourſelves: nor are we apt to regard their conduct as an intended picture of human nature, and their hiſtory, as that of the human heart, under the varying diſpenſations of providence. Whatever ſituation we are placed in, we are prone to undervalue our mercies, and to aggravate our troubles; and to compare the unfavourable ſide of our preſent circumſtances with the favourable ſide of ſome former, or ſome imaginary ſituation: by which means we are ingenious in rendering ourſelves diſcontented and unthankful; and are ever wiſhing for ſome change, yet ever ſeeming to change for the worſe. When we are aſhamed to reflect directly upon God; we are apt to vent our impatience in complaining againſt the inſtruments, or mere occaſions, of our uneaſineſs; not aware that our murmurings are againſt the Lord himſelf. It behoves us therefore to watch and pray againſt this rebellious unthankful ſpirit, the offspring of pride and unbelief; that confiding in the Lord's wiſdom, and conſcious of our own unworthineſs, we may ſtudy contentment: and if plain and ſharp reproofs tend to humble and quiet us, they are not miſplaced. But the Lord is ſlow to anger, and mercifully conſidereth our frame; and He knows how hard we find it to bear urgent want without impatience; and to believe his word in direct oppoſition to every appearance of probability. He will therefore frequently ſhew us his glory, and prove our obedience by ſupplying our wants, and exceeding our expectations; that we may not plead, we want encouragement to truſt and ſerve him in future. He could at all times, and therefore in ſome caſes he does, ſupply his people with ſuperfluities: but in general he ſees it beſt for them to have only things neceſſary, and that from day to day; and conſtrains moſt of them to expect their ſupport from *him* on the morrow, that they may ſee the glory of his power, and taſte the *ſweetneſs* of his truth and love, in their daily bread. Nor, if our faith were ſtrong, ſhould we ſleep any worſe, though, like Iſrael, we went to reſt without one morſel in the houſe for the next day; or any other confidence of obtaining it, except confidence in him, who, as "a Father, knoweth what "things we have need of." Yet we muſt labour even for the meat that periſheth, in ſubordination to our labouring for that which endureth unto everlaſting life; though both be the *gift* of God: and it is the Lord's will that the poor be liberal of their little, as well as the rich out of their abundance. (*Eph.* iv. 28.) Whether we have much or little, that which is hoarded in covetouſneſs and diſtruſt, corrupts, breeds worms, and ſtinks; and that alone is uſeful, which ſupplies our wants and thoſe of others. Whatever diligence we uſe in worldly buſineſs on other days, we are to conſider the ſabbath as the Lord's gift to us; and ſhould *previouſly* contrive every thing, even in reſpect of our food, in that manner, which may beſt render it a day of holy reſt from worldly, and of holy reſt in ſpiritual, employments: and he will contrive that we ſhall eventually be no loſers by ſo doing. But there is in us a ſpirit of perverſeneſs, and we ſeem to take pleaſure *naturally* in doing the very reverſe to the Lord's commands: this muſt be mortified, and ſubdued. Whatever providence in any honeſt way allots us, we ſhould conſider as the bread, which the Lord giveth us to eat, and be thankful for it, and contented with it. But if we cannot *merit* our bodily food, what claim can we have to that bread which came down from heaven, without which we muſt have inevitably periſhed? (*John*, vi. 27—58.) Let us then thankfully welcome, early and diligently go forth to gather, and joyfully feed upon this heavenly proviſion: let us ſeek earneſtly for the grace of God's Spirit to turn all our knowledge of the doctrine of Chriſt crucified, into the ſpiritual nouriſhment of our ſouls by faith and love; that we may not reſt in barren notions, or feed on worldly vanities, or ſatisfy ourſelves with former ſuppoſed experiences: but living upon this bread from day to day, in the attendance on all the means of grace, we ſhall ſhow that our ſouls are thereby nouriſhed in all holineſs, and fitted for all obedience. And thus alſo edifying others by the way, we ſhall in due time arrive at the heavenly Canaan, there to feaſt for ever on the rich proviſions of our Father's houſe above.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The children of Iſrael in want of water, chiding with Moſes, and tempting the Lord; Moſes expoſtulating with them, complaining to the Lord, and at his command ſmiting the rock, which afforded them water: the place named Maſſah, and Meribah, v. 1—7. 2d. Amalek aſſaulting Iſrael, and overcome by Joſhua, whilſt Moſes held up his hands with the rod of God: Amalek in conſequence doomed to deſtruction; and Moſes building an altar, called JEHOVAH-NISSI, v. 8—16.

AND all the congregation of the children of Iſrael journeyed from the wilderneſs of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink.

2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moſes, and ſaid, Give us water that we may drink. And Moſes ſaid unto them, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

3 And the people thirſted there for water; and the people murmured againſt Moſes, and ſaid, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou haſt brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle with thirſt?

4 And Moſes cried unto the LORD, ſaying, What ſhall I do unto this people? They be almoſt ready to ſtone me.

5 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Iſrael: and thy rod, wherewith thou ſmoteſt the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6 Behold, I will ſtand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 2. *Tempt the Lord*, &c.] The people were ſtill diſpoſed, after all they had ſeen and heard, even whilſt marching under the guidance of the cloud, and living upon the manna, to forget God, and to act as if they thought that Moſes and Aaron had of themſelves brought them out of Egypt! Thus they put the Lord's omniſcience and omnipotence to the trial; and behaved, as if they would tempt him to ſhew them in vengeance, that he was amongſt them, or to leave them to the conſequences of their perverſeneſs and unbelief; or would preſumptuouſly preſcribe to him what he ought to do; or limit him, and put it to the proof, whether he were able to perform their requirements or not, being determined to reject his authority, if he did not. (*Pſalm* lxxviii. 18—20.)

V. 6. *I will*, &c.] The Lord promiſed to diſplay his viſible glory by the cloud, which would mark out the particular rock that was to be ſmitten.—An immenſe quantity of water would be required for ſuch a vaſt multitude, and for their flocks and herds, *in one day:* but we have reaſon to conclude that this water followed them in the wilderneſs from place to place for ſome time at leaſt (*Pſalm* lxxviii. 15, 16. 20. cv. 41.) A kind of river ſeems to have flowed from this rock, that not only afforded the people ſome ſcanty and temporary relief, but was an abundant and durable ſupply for the whole company. The apoſtle ſays, that "this rock was Chriſt;" (1 *Cor.* x. 4,) that is a type of him: and it is obſervable, that God is never in Scripture called a Rock till after this event; but this title afterwards became common. A rock is firm and unſhaken, as a foundation on which to build; but from a rock of flint we might ſooner expect, as it were, fire than water: Chriſt is a tried foundation of immoveable power and ſtability; but we ſinners had more reaſon to have expected vengeance from his juſtice, than grace from his fulneſs. This rock muſt be ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, the giver of the law, even that rod by which the plagues were inflicted upon Egypt: Chriſt was made under the law, and was ſmitten by its righteous curſe, and bare that puniſhment in the believer's ſtead, which the unbeliever muſt himſelf ſuffer for ever. The rock was ſmitten by Moſes, at the Lord's command, *once* in the preſence of the elders of Iſrael, who were then full of rebellion; whilſt the ſymbol of God's preſence and glory reſted upon it: Chriſt was wounded for our tranſgreſſions of the law, in the preſence of the rebellious Jewiſh elders, once for all, by man's inſtrumentality, but by his determinate purpoſe, who ſaid, "Awake, "O ſword, againſt the ſhepherd, againſt the man, who "is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, ſmite the ſhepherd;" (*Zech.* xiii. 7;) whilſt evident tokens of divine majeſty attended his crucifixion and death; (*Matt.* xxvii. 45—54.) After the rock was ſmitten, the waters flowed forth abundantly, without which ſupply Iſrael muſt have periſhed: after Chriſt's crucifixion, and in conſequence of his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion, the Holy Ghoſt, in all his humbling, ſanctifying, and comforting influences, as well as in his manifold gifts and operations, was abundantly communicated, (*John*, vii. 37—39;) without which we all muſt have periſhed in our ſins. Numerous as the Iſraelites were, there was water enough for them all, and a conſtant abundant ſupply: numerous as believers are, the ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt ſuffices for them all; and there is ſo large and inexhauſtible a fulneſs in him, that millions of millions might drink and be ſatisfied, if there were ſo many athirſt for theſe living waters. The water flowed from

FOR THE REV? Mr SCOTT's BIBLE.

EXODUS CH. XVII. VE. VI.

Mote del. Taylor sc.

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of it, that the people may drink. And Moſes did ſo in the ſight of the elders of Iſrael.

7 And he called the name of the place Maſſah and Meribah, becauſe of the chiding of the children of Iſrael, and becauſe they tempted the LORD, ſaying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Iſrael in Rephidim.

9 And Moſes ſaid unto Joſhua, Chooſe us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will ſtand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joſhua did as Moſes had ſaid to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moſes, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to paſs when Moſes held up his hand, that Iſrael prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moſes' hands *were* heavy, and they took a ſtone and put *it* under him, and he ſat thereon: and Aaron and Hur ſtayed up his hands, the one on the one ſide, and the other on the other ſide; and his hands were ſteady until the going down of the ſun.

13 And Joſhua diſcomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the ſword.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearſe *it* in the ears of Joſhua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 And Moſes built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-NISSI.

16 For he ſaid, Becauſe the LORD hath ſworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.

CHAP.

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from the rock in ſtreams to refreſh the wilderneſs, and attended them on their way to Canaan: and this water flows from Chriſt through the ordinances, in the barren wilderneſs of this world, to refreſh our ſouls, to purify and fructify them, until we come to glory. Multitudes, however, who drank of the water, which flowed from the rock, periſhed in the wilderneſs: but "whoſoever drinketh of "the water which Chriſt ſhall give him, it ſhall be in "him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life," (*Iſai.* xli. 17, 18. xliii. 19, 20. xlviii. 21. *John* iv. 10, 13, 14.)

V. 7. *Maſſah, Meribah.*] That is, *temptation* and *chiding*; the people tempted the Lord, and chided with Moſes.

V. 8. *Amalek.*] We find Amalek among the deſcendants of Eſau, (*Gen.* xxxvi. 16:) whence ſome ſuppoſe, that the Amalekites were a tribe of the Edomites. If ſo, they were the more inexcuſable in this unprovoked attack upon their brethren, who attempted not to moleſt them: but this is very doubtful. Nay, as they are always mentioned as a diſtinct nation from the Edomites; and as they ſeem to have been a conſiderable people before Eſau's time; we have every reaſon to conclude that they were not his deſcendants. (*Gen.* xiv. 7. *Num.* xxiv. 20.)

V. 10. *To the top*, &c.] Whence Moſes could witneſs the battle; and with his rod, by which ſuch wonders had been wrought, he would be viſible to the ſoldiers for their encouragement.

V. 11. *Moſes held*, &c.] This typified Chriſt's interceſſion for his people, when conflicting with their enemies; who prevail in conſequence, and ſhould take encouragement from it. It repreſented alſo the efficacy of fervent prayer: nor ſhould we forget that *Moſes* with whom the people had juſt before chided, and whom they ſeemed ready to murder, now ſtretched out his hands holding the rod, as the token of their victory!

V. 14. *Write this*, &c.] This is the firſt time writing is mentioned in Scripture: probably Moſes had before been inſtructed to write ſome of his hiſtory; though ſome think this was ſpoken by anticipation; that the law written by the finger of God was the firſt writing; and that Moſes was thenceforth inſtructed in writing his books.—As Joſhua was choſen to command in the wars of Iſrael, it was proper that he ſhould be informed of this ſentence, that he might embrace every opportunity of executing it: and enjoin the ſame conduct to his ſucceſſors.—This ſentence was completed by David, after whoſe times we ſeldom read of the name of Amalek.

V. 15. *JEHOVAH-NISSI.*] That is, *the Lord my Banner.* Moſes aſcribed the victory to the Lord's banner under which Iſrael fought; gave him the glory of it; and conſidered it as an earneſt of many more. This is the firſt altar, which we read of, after Jacob's going down into Egypt, during which period ſacrifices had been greatly interrupted.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we are walking according to the commandments of the Lord, we may ſecurely depend upon him to ſupply our real wants, in his own time and manner: but we muſt expect trials, and learn to exerciſe patience as well as faith. Inordinate and impatient thirſting, even for needful things, puts the mind into a ferment, renders us forgetful of our former experience of the Lord's power and goodneſs, and diſpoſes us to quarrel with and upbraid our beſt friends, and even preſumptuouſly to tempt, diſtruſt, and preſcribe to God himſelf. They, who are employed in endeavours to do important good to others, muſt expect much unreaſonable and ungrateful behaviour; and not only to be reproached, but expoſed to danger for their beſt ſervices: they have need therefore to be armed with much patience, prudence, and meekneſs; and to have much communion with God; that they may ſpread every caſe before him, and ſeek comfort, protection, and direction from him. The

Lord

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Jethro bringing back to Moses his wife and sons; his reception, and the account given him of the Lord's goodness to Israel, with his joy, gratitude, and sacrifices, v. 1—12. 2d. The good advice which Jethro gave to Moses, and Moses' concurrence with it, v. 13—26. 3d. Jethro's departure, v. 27.

WHEN Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, *and* that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt:

2 Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

3 And her two sons, of which the name of the one *was* Gershom, (for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land,)

4 And the name of the other *was* Eliezer, (for the God of my father, *said he*, *was* mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:)

5 And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God.

6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

7 And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him, and they asked each other of *their* welfare: and they came into the tent.

8 And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, *and* all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and *how* the LORD delivered them.

9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel; whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

10 And Jethro said, Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly *he was* above them.

12 And

Lord will honour those, who behave thus in trying circumstances, in the presence of their despisers, and perhaps make them instruments of their preservation. And he himself teaches us by his example, not "to be overcome "of evil, but to overcome evil with good:" when the rod of Moses, which might justly have been the token of deserved vengeance after the manner of Egypt, was stretched forth to smite the rock, that he might give drink to his people, his chosen, though they were so rebellious. How can his servants want, when such a gracious God has power to command food from the clouds, and water from a rock in rich abundance?—Thus whilst the curse of God might righteously have been executed upon our guilty souls; behold the Son of God becomes a curse for us! From this smitten rock flow the streams of salvation, which follow us through the wilderness. Thence the believing soul receives in measure answerable, not only to his necessities, but to his largest expectations: whilst all, who are athirst, yea all that *will*, are invited to come, and take of them freely. Let us then ask, and receive, and drink, and rejoice, and live for ever.—But we must observe that our enemies will especially assault us, when drinking most abundantly of these living streams: they will, however, prepare us for the conflict; and fighting under the Lord our banner, we shall finally prevail, and give him the glory. We may also observe that some men are useful in one way, and some in another; but none so serviceable as they, who serve the public by fervent persevering prayers. Little do statesmen in the cabinet, or commanders in the field, understand, how much the success of their deliberations is influenced by the prayers of the true Christian in his closet, in his family, and in the house of God. But alas! how soon we flag in these spiritual exercises, even sooner than the soldier wearies in the field of battle; and we have need to be supported, and animated by each other: but especially we need continual assistance from the Lord, that we may pray always and not faint. And they have indeed cause to tremble, who have not only the sword of an enemy, but the prayers of God's people, and the memorials of God's word against them; for the complete salvation of the righteous is inseparable from the entire destruction of the wicked.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 6. *He said*, &c.] Jethro sent a messenger to inform Moses of his arrival, by whom he thus addressed him, and he accordingly went forth to meet him. (*Matt.* viii. 5—10. *Luke* vii. 2—10.)

V. 11. *I know*, &c.] Jethro declared, that he was greatly confirmed in his faith, and encouraged in his worship of the true God, by this decided victory, which Jehovah had obtained over the proud and presumptuous opposition of

12 And Jethro, Moſes' father in law, took a burnt-offering, and ſacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Iſrael to eat bread with Moſes' father in law before God.

13 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Moſes ſat to judge the people: and the people ſtood by Moſes, from the morning unto the evening.

14 And when Moſes' father in law ſaw all that he did to the people, he ſaid, What *is* this thing that thou doeſt to the people? Why ſitteſt thou thyſelf alone, and all the people ſtand by thee from morning unto even?

15 And Moſes ſaid unto his father in law, Becauſe the people come unto me to enquire of God.

16 When they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the ſtatutes of God and his laws.

17 And Moſes' father in law ſaid unto him, The thing that thou doeſt *is* not good.

18 Thou wilt ſurely wear away, both thou, and this people that *is* with thee: for this thing *is* too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyſelf alone.

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counſel, and God ſhall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayeſt bring the cauſes unto God:

20 And thou ſhall teach them ordinances and laws, and ſhalt ſhew them the way wherein they muſt walk, and the work that they muſt do.

21 Moreover, thou ſhalt provide out of all the people, able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs: and place *ſuch* over them, *to be* rulers of thouſands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

22 And let them judge the people at all ſeaſons: and it ſhall be, *that* every great matter they ſhall bring unto thee, but every ſmall matter they ſhall judge: So ſhall it be eaſier for thyſelf, and they ſhall bear *the burden* with thee.

23 If thou ſhalt do this thing, and God command thee *ſo*, then thou ſhalt be able to endure, and all this people ſhall alſo go to their place in peace.

24 So Moſes hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had ſaid.

25 And Moſes choſe able men out of all Iſrael, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thouſands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

26 And they judged the people at all ſeaſons: the hard cauſes they brought unto Moſes, but every ſmall matter they judged themſelves.

27 And Moſes let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

CHAP.

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of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and by the redemption of Iſrael. Jethro was one of Abraham's deſcendants by Keturah, being a Midianite.

V. 12. *And Jethro*, &c.] The Aaronic prieſthood was not yet eſtabliſhed: Jethro therefore, as an ancient prieſt of the Lord, officiated in theſe ſacrifices, in which though not *of Iſrael*, he had fellowſhip with Iſrael, which appeared favourable to the caſe of the Gentiles. Having offered a burnt-offering, they ſacrificed other ſacrifices, and feaſted together with thankfulneſs and ſober chearfulneſs, as before God; which was a repreſentation of the life of faith in Chriſt, and the communion of the ſaints.

V. 13. *To judge the people*, &c.] Moſes had undertaken to try the cauſes of the Iſraelites, to decide their differences; and in ſome caſes to enquire of God for them what they ought to do. (15.) As the people were ignorant, and we may well conclude very contentious, as well as numerous; as Moſes was very acceſſible and meek; and as their ſuits were managed without coſt, or trouble; they would doubtleſs furniſh him with abundance of employment.

V. 19. *Be thou*, &c.] Jethro adviſed, that in ſuch cauſes as were more difficult, and required direction from God or more immediately referred to his worſhip and ſervice, there ſhould be an appeal to Moſes.

V. 23. *God command thee ſo*, &c.] It was thus intimated that Moſes ought to refer this matter to God, and follow Jethro's counſel, in caſe God approved of it. Accordingly this and ſome other arrangements were made by the Lord's appointment, and the people's approbation.—(*Numb.* xi. 16. *Deut.* i. 9—18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The report of the Lord's power and goodneſs, ſhewn in behalf of Iſrael, having reached diſtant places, confirmed the faith, and excited the joy and gratitude of ſuch, as were not perſonally intereſted in thoſe peculiar benefits: and the records of the ſame events, having been handed down to theſe diſtant ages, ſhould produce the ſame effects upon our minds; that we too may be eſtabliſhed in the faith,

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1ſt, Iſrael's arrival and encampment at Mount Sinai, v. 1—2. 2d. Moſes hearing and delivering the Lord's meſſage to the people, their engagement to obedience, and his report of it unto the Lord, v. 3—8. 3d. Preparations made, regulations preſcribed, and the time ſet for the giving of the law, with the tremendous introduction to that ſolemn tranſaction, v. 9—25.

IN the third month, when the children of Iſrael were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the ſame day came they *into* the wilderneſs of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the deſert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderneſs, and there Iſrael encamped before the mount.

3 And Moſes went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, ſaying, Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the houſe of Jacob, and tell the children of Iſrael;

4 Ye have ſeen what I did unto the Egyptians,

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and ſtirred up to truſt and praiſe the Lord for his mercies to Iſrael.—Huſbands and wives may, on ſome occaſions, be obliged to ſeparate for a time: but the ſooner they come together again, and the more they live together the better: extraordinary ſervices and dangers may be improper for the female ſex to ſhare in; but ordinary cares, and every comfort and honour of the huſband, the wife ought to participate. Nor ſhould children needleſsly be deprived of the great benefit, which they may derive from the care, inſtruction, and example of pious and wiſe parents: and the people will be much edified, when they witneſs how well they who are entruſted with the adminiſtration of public affairs, and take care of the church of God, regulate their own families. When we record our trials, we ſhould be careful to record our mercies alſo: "Perſecuted, but not "forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed;" exiles, but protected by the God of our fathers. It is very comely, when perſons, employed in the moſt important public ſervices, pay a proper attention to the duties and regards of private life: and when they, who are highly honoured of God, are very humble and affable, and ſhew all reſpect to ſuperior relations, and gratitude to old benefactors.—Our meeting from time to time with our friends on earth will be very comfortable and uſeful, if we converſe together concerning the loving kindneſs and wonderful works of God; if we unite in praiſe and thankſgiving; and if, by ſobriety, love, gratitude, and the fear of God, we turn every feſtive interview into a religious ordinance, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to the Lord: What then will be our final meeting in heaven, where the love, joy, and praiſe will be complete, uninterrupted, and eternal!—But our affectionate attention to relatives and friends muſt not render us negligent of our proper buſineſs; any more than the ingratitude, which we experience, ſhould render us weary of doing good. The moſt exalted ſtations have the heavieſt work connected with them, if they be properly filled: for ſuch is human nature, that it is not only an arduous undertaking to reſtrain men from ungodlineſs, but very difficult to keep them from devouring one another: and they, who would adminiſter juſtice, keep the peace, and repreſs violence and fraud, will have enough to engroſs their thoughts, to burden their ſpirits, and to occupy their time. Yet, in doing with our might, whatever our hand findeth to do, a prudent regard to health is not only allowable, but our duty; which it is not good to neglect, however well we may be employed: and wiſdom is profitable to direct men in high ſtations, what they muſt do themſelves, and what they may do by others. The Lord hath alſo divided his gifts ſeverally to different men; and an impartial obſerver, though of inferior endowments, may ſometimes ſuggeſt a counſel, which the wiſeſt of men may very profitably attend to: yea his wiſdom will diſpoſe him to attend to it; "for "give inſtruction to a wiſe man, and he will yet be wiſer;" "but fools deſpiſe wiſdom, and inſtruction." Yet we muſt not follow the wiſeſt counſel, until we have, by attention to the ſcriptures and prayer, conſulted the Lord alſo; who often counſels us by the advice of our pious friends, that we may love and be united to them, as well as dependent on, and thankful to him.—Magiſtracy, (as well as the miniſtry of the Goſpel,) is an ordinance of God: they therefore, who are employed in the moſt ſubordinate offices of government, ſhould be ſelected perſons, "able "men," of clear heads, and ſound judgments; ſuch as "fear God," and from a principle of genuine piety become "men of truth," of integrity and fidelity; and have learned to "hate covetouſneſs," that they "may ſhake "their hands from holding of bribes," and adminiſter juſtice impartially. What then ought law-givers, ſupreme magiſtrates, and the miniſters of religion to be! Happy indeed are the people, that are bleſſed with ſuch rulers and teachers; "yea bleſſed are the people who have the Lord "for their God."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1. *On the*, &c.] The Iſraelites left Egypt on the 15th day of the firſt month, and are ſuppoſed to have arrived at Sinai on the firſt day of the third month, that is on the 47th day from their departure. Three days afterwards the law was delivered; that is on the 50th day; on which the feaſt of pentecoſt was held, as it is ſuppoſed, in commemoration thereof.

V. 3. *Moſes*, &c.] Moſes went up to mount Sinai, doubtleſs by the Lord's command, in order to receive his meſſage to the people, who were now to be incorporated, and formed into a church and nation, under the government of God, and in covenant with him: Having hitherto been firſt a ſingle family, and then a number of ſlaves.

V. 4. *On Eagles'*, &c.] As the Eagle carries her young upon her wings, (*Deut.* xxxii. 11,) out of the reach of thoſe who

tians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myſelf.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine.

6 And ye ſhall be unto me a kingdom of prieſts, and an holy nation. Theſe *are* the words which thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael.

7 And Moſes came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all theſe words which the LORD commanded him.

8 And all the people anſwered together, and ſaid, All that the LORD hath ſpoken, we will do. And Moſes returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Lo, I come

who would attempt their deſtruction: Thus the Lord reſcued the Iſraelites from Egypt, that they might be his people, dwelling under his protection, and devoted to his worſhip and ſervice.

V. 5. *Keep my covenant*, &c.] The national covenant with Iſrael was here meant; the covenant of peculiarity; the charter, upon which they were incorporated as a people under the government of Jehovah. It was an engagement of God to give them poſſeſſion of Canaan, and to protect them in it; to render the land fruitful, and the nation victorious and proſperous, and to perpetuate his oracles and ordinances amongſt them; as long as they did not, as a people, reject his authority, apoſtatize to idolatry, and tolerate open wickedneſs. Theſe things would conſtitute a forfeiture of the covenant; as their national rejection of Chriſt did afterwards.—At the ſame time true believers among them were *perſonally* dealt with according to the covenant of mercy and grace, even as true Chriſtians now are: and unbelievers were under the covenant of works, and liable to condemnation by it, as at preſent. Yet the national covenant was not ſtrictly either the one or the other, but had ſomething in it of the nature of each. It had not reference to their final ſalvation perſonally, nor was it broken by the perſonal diſobedience, or even idolatry of any number of individuals; provided it was not ſanctioned or tolerated by public authority. It was, however, a type of the covenant, which is made with true believers in Chriſt Jeſus; as were all the tranſactions with Iſrael: but like other types, it had not the very image, but a ſhadow, of good things to come. As a nation they broke this covenant: therefore the Lord declared that he would make a new covenant with Iſrael, putting his law, (not only in their hands,) but in their inward parts, and writing it, (not upon tables of ſtone,) but in their hearts; forgiving their iniquity, and remembering their ſins no more. (*Jer.* xxxi. 32—34. *Heb.* viii. 7—12. x. 16, 17.)—In all the ſcriptures referred to, the covenant ſpoken of, as ready to vaniſh away, is evidently not the covenant of works, but the national covenant with Iſrael, which they had vacated by their ſins. Without we carefully attend to this diſtinction, and keep in view continually this national covenant with Iſrael, we ſhall be liable to fall into perpetual miſtakes in reading the Old Teſtament. Nothing can be more abſurd than to ſuppoſe, that the nation of the Jews was under the covenant of works, which knows nothing of repentance, faith in a mediator, forgiveneſs of ſins, or grace: yet we oft meet with language in many authors, which ſeems to convey ſuch an idea. Though it is more common to hear the whole nation of Iſrael ſpoken of, as if they all bare the character, and poſſeſſed the privileges, of true believers, actually intereſted in the covenant of grace; and concluſions are drawn from ſuch premiſes, as if they were undeniable.—But in fact, they were all under a diſpenſation of mercy, and had outward privileges, and advantages many ways for ſalvation: but like profeſſing Chriſtians, they many of them reſted in them and looked no further. (*Rom.* ii. 17—29. iii. 1—9.) "All were not Iſrael, that were of Iſrael."—The outward covenant was made with the nation, entitling them to outward advantages, upon the condition of outward national obedience. The covenant of grace was ratified perſonally with the true believer, and ſealed and ſecured ſpiritual bleſſings, by producing a holy diſpoſition of heart, and ſpiritual obedience to the law of God.—In caſe Iſrael kept the Lord's covenant, he promiſed, that they ſhould be to him a peculiar treaſure; which is ſafely repoſited, becauſe highly valued. The Septuagint renders it *a peculiar people*, (*Tit.* ii. 14. 1 *Pet.* ii. 9.) All the earth being the Lord's, he might have any where found a nation as proper to be choſen as the people of Iſrael: this implied, that, as his choice of them was gratuitous, ſo, if they rejected his covenant, he would reject them as a people, and communicate their privileges to others; as he hath done, ſince the introduction of the Chriſtian diſpenſation.

V. 6. *A kingdom of prieſts*, &c.] A kingdom, of which Jehovah would act as Lawgiver, Judge, and protector, from his mercy ſeat: A kingdom of prieſts ſeparated from other people, conſecrated to him, permitted to approach him, to offer ſacrifices and ſupplications, and poſſeſſing a ſacred character amongſt the nations of the earth; and a holy people, as being a kingdom of prieſts. All this Iſrael was in profeſſion, and outward privilege: All this the *true Chriſtian* is in his ſpiritual privileges and real character, in the ſight of God, and in the ſight of the world. (1 *Pet.* ii. 9. *Rev.* i. 6.)

V. 7. *Laid before*, &c.] Moſes plainly laid before the elders the terms of this national covenant, and demanded their determination concerning it. Theſe ſeem to have been the principal perſons, who repreſented the people.

V. 8. *All that*, &c.] Thus the people conſented to the covenant, though probably with too great confidence:—This being ſettled, preparations were made for the promulgation of the law, according to which that covenant was to be framed.

V. 9. *Lo, I come*, &c.] The ſolemn manner, and terrible majeſty, with which the law was delivered, from Mount

come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I ſpeak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moſes told the words of the people unto the LORD.

10 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go unto the people, and ſanctify them to-day, and to-morrow, and let them waſh their clothes.

11 And be ready againſt the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the ſight of all the people, upon mount Sinai.

12 And thou ſhalt ſet bounds unto the people round about, ſaying, Take heed to yourſelves, *that ye* go *not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whoſoever toucheth the mount, ſhall be ſurely put to death.

13 There ſhall not an hand touch it, but he ſhall ſurely be ſtoned or ſhot through; whether *it be* beaſt or man, it ſhall not live: when the trumpet ſoundeth long, they ſhall come up to the mount.

14 And Moſes went down from the mount unto the people, and ſanctified the people, and they waſhed their clothes.

15 And he ſaid unto the people, Be ready againſt the third day: come not at *your* wives.

16 And it came to paſs on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; ſo that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

17 And Moſes brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they ſtood at the nether part of the mount.

18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a ſmoke, becauſe the LORD deſcended upon it in fire: and the ſmoke thereof aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

19 And when the voice of the trumpet ſounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moſes ſpake, and God anſwered him by a voice.

20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moſes *up* to the top of the mount, and Moſes went up.

21 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go down, charge the people, leſt they break through unto the LORD, to gaze, and many of them periſh.

22 And

Mount Sinai out of the thick cloud, was chiefly intended to render the people ever after willing to hear the Lord's meſſage from the mouth of Moſes, and believe his teſtimony; rather than to behold ſuch a ſight any more. The thick cloud alſo repreſented the comparative darkneſs of that diſpenſation: when Chriſt was transfigured, the voice came out of a *bright* cloud, "this is my beloved Son, in "whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him."

V. 10. *Sanctify them*, &c.] The waſhing with water, and other obſervances of external purification, repreſented that inward preparation of heart, that ſeparation from ſin, and indifference about even lawful cares and affections, which become us, when ſolemnly joining ourſelves unto God in a perpetual covenant not to be forgotten.

V. 11. *Will come down*, &c.] That is, the Lord would give evident and awful tokens of his preſence and glory.

V. 12. *Thou ſhalt*, &c.] Theſe regulations, and all the terrific ſolemnities of this tranſaction, were calculated to impreſs the minds of the people with a deep ſenſe of the divine majeſty and purity, and to convince them of their own guilt and unholineſs; to ſhew them that they could not ſtand in judgment before God by their own obedience to the law, which was about to be delivered; that conſidered in itſelf it was more ſuited to exclude them from the preſence of God, than to bring them near to him: and thus to prepare them to underſtand and receive the Goſpel, which was preached to them in the ceremonial law.

V. 13. *When the*, &c.] This was effected by the miniſtration of Angels, and at this ſignal the people were directed to approach the preſcribed bounds. (*Gal.* iii. 19. *Heb.* ii. 2.) Some ſuppoſe this trumpet was a repreſentation of the Goſpel, to which the law has a ſubſerviency.—The law of itſelf would drive us from God; but being humbled by the knowledge of ſin; we are by the ſound of the Goſpel encouraged to approach him.

V. 15. *Come*, &c.] (1 *Cor.* vii. 5.)

V. 19. *Moſes ſpake*, &c.] Then it is probable he ſaid, "I exceedingly fear, and quake:" Yet he and Aaron were commanded and encouraged to go up into the mount: (20—24;) not only as types of Chriſt, in his mediatorial character; but as juſtified believers, who need not fear the juſtice of God, or the curſes of the law, being redeemed from them, by him who was made a curſe for them.

V. 21. *To gaze*, &c.] It might have been ſuppoſed that the terror of this proſpect would have checked the preſumptuous curioſity of the people: but the hard heart of an unawakened ſinner can trifle with the moſt terrible denuncia-

tions,

22 And let the priests also which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

24 And the LORD said unto him, Away get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

CHAP.

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tions and judgments of an angry God; and convert them all into a mere diversion and amusement; or make them the subject of curious speculations, which leave the heart and conscience untouched.

V. 22. *The priests also*, &c.] These must have been certain persons, who had been appointed, or accustomed to offer sacrifices in their different tribes, before the Aaronic priesthood.

V. 24. *Lest he break forth*, &c.] Every circumstance and expression were intended to evince, that the law now about to be given, though holy, just, and good, could speak nothing but terror and destruction to the transgressor; and fill the heart with horror, dismay, and desperation. But in subserviency to the Covenant of Grace, its uses are manifold. There the sinner discovers what he ought to be, and what he is, and consequently what he wants. There he learns the nature, necessity, and glory of redemption and sanctification; and having been warned to flee for refuge to the atonement of Christ, and learned to depend on, cleave to, and love the Saviour; the law in his hand is the rule of his obedience; the law in his heart is the source of that obedience, and the evidence of his forgiveness: and as the test of self-examination, he is thereby continually made sensible of his sinfulness, and entire dependence on the Saviour, and urged to press forwards after nearer and nearer conformity to this perfect standard. These are some of the uses of the law to sinners, in bringing them unto Christ that they may be justified by faith; and in directing the believer in attaining assurance and glorifying God. It served also to the Israelites, and still does among us, to restrain the excesses of wicked men by its terrors, and to keep the world in some degree of order; so long as men are not driven to desperation by a knowledge of its full strictness and severity. It discovers also the moral character of the Deity, and manifests his justice in the judgments which he executes; and will make the wickedness of men, and the righteousness of God, more conspicuous, in the great day of judgment and of perdition of ungodly men. But it is very difficult to drive men from the unreasonable notion, that a sinner should seek justification before God by his imperfect, scanty, and external obedience to this law: and to counteract that propensity, this tremendous scene was exhibited; as well as to teach the Israelites, that even in respect of their national covenant, though their obedience was required, yet the blessings were not merited by it, but *freely* given by a gracious God in a way becoming his own holiness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though our blessedness as God's people originate from his unmerited kindness, yet we must evidence that it belongs to us, by our upright and voluntary obedience to his commandments; without which we have no proof that we are his peculiar treasure, above the rest of our fallen race.—We can never enough admire the Lord's condescension and compassion to us, in our low estate and undone condition, in all he has done for us and conferred upon us: and we may not only rejoice that the Lord reigneth; but that, though he delivers his holy law from mount Sinai, we may approach him upon his holy hill of Zion, upon a mercy seat, as God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.—Blessed be God, we are under a dispensation of mercy, and have, like Israel, the outward seals and advantages of the covenant; but let us not rest in them. As upon the throne of grace, the Lord mildly receives the submission of repenting sinners, and reigns over his redeemed people; let us draw near unto him, and thankfully receive the salvation which he bestows, and yield ourselves up to him as his willing subjects. Such are a holy priesthood, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God the Father, through Jesus Christ; they have him for their portion, and are consecrated to his service; and should never forget their sacred character, nor disgrace it by any inconsistent conduct.—But alas! we are more apt to profess, and to resolve, than to practise. Let us not then say, that we will do so and so; but beg of God to enable us so to do.—The ministers of God are required fairly and plainly to lay the whole of their message before the people, and in prayer they report before him the reception with which it meets; but they are not answerable for consequences. The more seriously we prepare for the ordinances of God, and the more our minds are abstracted from all earthly objects, the greater benefit shall we receive. But in approaching to God we must never lose sight of his holiness and greatness, or of our own meanness and pollution. Even upon mount Zion our God is a consuming fire, and must be worshipped with reverence and godly fear, without presumptuous familiarity, or vain curiosity.—(*Heb.* xii. 28, 29.)

How then shall we approach him upon this terrible mount Sinai! Could we rush uncalled into the midst of the fire, tempest, and earthquakes? no more can we stand in judgment before him according to the tenor of his righteous law. And if such tremendous tokens of the divine justice accompanied its promulgation: what will that day be when the earth shall be encircled in flames; and all, who ever dwelt thereon, shall be gathered before the tribunal of the Judge, to hear their final and decisive sentence according to it! Happy they, who have felt their need of a Mediator, have hearkened to the voice of the Saviour, have from him obtained forgiveness of all their sins, and acceptance with God; who have received the law, disarmed of it's curses and stripped of it's terrors, from his

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The ten commandments ſpoken by God himſelf to the whole congregation of Iſrael, v. 1.—17. 2d. The conſternation of the people, and their conference with Moſes, v. 18—20. 3d. Moſes receiving from God an additional prohibition of idolatry, and rules about erecting an altar, v. 21—26.

AND God ſpake all theſe words, ſaying,
2 I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage.

3 Thou

loving hands, and have been taught by his grace to love and obey it in ſincerity and truth. Theſe, like Moſes and Aaron, though at firſt they tremble at God's word, and are always humbled before him, yet will through Chriſt grow, as it were, familiar with mount Sinai; and fearleſs of condemnation will meditate on the terror of the ſentence of the law, and thence draw arguments to increaſe their gratitude, and quicken their willing ſervices: and at laſt they will triumph, when the wicked ſhall be calling in vain to the rocks, to cover them from the wrath of their offended Judge.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *And God ſpake*, &c.] The voice of God was heard, but no ſimilitude was ſeen; (*Deut.* v. 22:) and this voice was ſo loud, that all the immenſe multitude of the Iſraelites could clearly diſtinguiſh all the following words; namely, the ten commandments and no more, which may be conſidered as the grand outlines of the moral law of God.—Of that law ſome traces are diſcoverable by reaſon, and the whole is conſonant to reaſon: every part of it has its foundation in the nature of God and of man; in the relations which we bear to him and to each other; and in thoſe obligations which thence ariſe. It is evident that there is a diſtinction betwixt moral precepts and inſtituted appointments: ſome things, which God hath commanded, are in themſelves ſo indifferent, that he might without impropriety have prohibited them; as the uſe of bread and wine in one religious ordinance, and the uſe of water in another. But there are laws of a different nature: and it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that God could, conſiſtently with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, have reverſed the commandments which he hath given his creatures, to love him and one another, to ſpeak truth, and to do juſtice. Indeed ritual precepts are equally obligatory except when they come in competition with moral duties; and then the Lord "will have mercy and not "ſacrifice." But the ritual injunction is of temporary obligation, had no exiſtence before its expreſs appointment, may be vacated by the ſame authority, or having anſwered the purpoſe, its obligation may ceaſe of courſe: whilſt the moral precept is of immutable and eternal validity. The different circumſtances, indeed, in which rational creatures may be placed, occaſion *circumſtantial* alterations: thus the entrance of ſin and miſery hath rendered patience and forgiveneſs of injuries a part of the law of love to God and to our neighbours, which otherwiſe had found no place for exereiſe. Theſe duties, and many others, required of us in our preſent ſituation, will ceaſe entirely in heaven. Yet the grand principles, which *neceſſarily* require them of man, circumſtanced as he now is, would have been the ſame had he never ſinned, and will remain the ſame to all eternity.

As the foundations of the moral law are immutable, ſo its obligations are univerſal: the law, though given on this particular occaſion to Iſrael, demands obedience from all mankind; and the whole world will be judged according to it, and to the opportunity which they have had of becoming acquainted with it; whether by reaſon and tradition alone, or by the light of the written word: except as the believer has obtained deliverance from its merited condemnation.

The law is alſo *ſpiritual*, and takes cognizance of the ſecret thoughts, deſires, intentions, and diſpoſitions of the heart; and above all things requires a proper regulation of the judgment, will, and affections. Its grand demand is LOVE, without which the beſt external obedience is condemned as mere hypocriſy. This is a peculiarity of the law of God, whoſe incommunicable prerogative it is to ſearch the heart: but, in common with other laws, it requires perfect, unfailing, uninterrupted, and perpetual obedience; for no law in the world tolerates diſobedience to itſelf. From the entrance to the cloſe of life, the law of God requires exact conformity to every precept; and he that "keepeth the whole law, and of-"fendeth in one point, is guilty of all." Every omiſſion, or commiſſion, exceſs, defect, or variation, internal or external, in word or deed, is ανομια, *a violation of the law, or a deviation in one way or other from that perfect rule.* This is the Apoſtle's definition of ſin; (1 *John* iii. 4.) and the wages of ſin is death; (*Rom.* vi. 23.) from which ſentence there is no deliverance but by the mercy of our Prince. "Thus by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh "be juſtified in the ſight of God; for by the law is the "knowledge of ſin;" but not the knowledge of ſalvation. (*Rom.* iii. 20—23.)—The ten commandments may be conſidered as the *text* of this moral law, which is ſtill more abridged in the two great commands, "of loving "God with all our heart, and our neighbour as our-"ſelves:" and we are authorized by the example of Chriſt to interpret every one of them in the ſtricteſt, moſt ſpiritual, and extenſive ſenſe of which it is capable; and to conſider all the preceptive part of Scripture, as a divinely-inſpired comment upon them. Even repentance of ſin, faith in a Mediator, love, gratitude, and obedience to that Mediator, and other evangelical graces and duties, are all exerciſes of ſupreme love to God; and are neceſſarily required by the law from man, *circumſtanced as he now is, under the condemnation of a ſinner, and under the diſpenſation of mercy, in the particular mode revealed in the Goſpel.* In this view we may decide, or rather wave, the controverſy about the rule of duty, whether it be the ten commandments or the whole Scriptures, as the one is the text, and the other the expoſition, and the whole "ex-"ceeding broad." Chriſt fulfilled the requirements of this

3 Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.
4 Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeneſs *of any thing*, that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath,

this law moſt perfectly: yet *in his peculiar circumſtances*, it actually required all that love for the Father, and for his brethren, and all thoſe expreſſions of it, which, ſubſequent to his incarnation that he might be our Mediator, he manifeſted in his life and death. Nor did ever apoſtle, or prophet reach, in one ſingle inſtance, that degree of love and purity which it demands.

The knowledge of the extent, excellency, nature, and uſes of the law of God, in connexion with, and ſubſerviency to the Goſpel of Chriſt, is of ſuch vaſt importance, towards ſolving difficulties, anſwering objections, determining controverſies, and preventing miſtakes; that I hope for the reader's forgiveneſs, if I expatiate, in the expoſition of this chapter, conſiderably beyond my general limits. The dreams of a purgatory, either before or after the day of judgment; the flattering illuſions of the merit of human obedience; the palliating excuſes that are made for ſin; the objections that are made to the ſovereignty of divine Grace in the Goſpel, and to God's method of juſtifying ſinners; and all Antinomian abuſe of thoſe precious truths of revelation, ſeem to have their principal foundation in ignorance of the law of God. Ignorance of its extenſive requirements ſupports careleſs preſumption, and Phariſaical ſelf-confidence: ignorance of its *excellency* excites murmurs and outcries againſt the ſeverity of its awful ſanction; and gives riſe to ſtrange notions of being ſaved from the law itſelf as an enemy which Chriſt hath deſtroyed, inſtead of being ſaved from the condemnation and power of ſin, and taught to delight in the law of God after the inward man. The ſame ignorance hath led ſome to frame in imagination a new law, which hath been ſubſtituted in the place of the old law, ſince by ſin man became unable to obey it; hath occaſioned innumerable objections to the doctrine, and miſtakes about the nature, of regeneration; and indeed hath prevented many real Chriſtians from glorifying God in that manner, which they otherwiſe might have done. Were the law of God well underſtood, the perſon and offices of the Saviour muſt appear moſt ſuitable and precious; the nature and neceſſity of regeneration evident and rational; and the genuine beauty of Chriſtianity, as reinſtating a loſt ſinner in his Maker's favour, and recovering him to his image, in a way honourable to all the perfections of the Deity, would ſhine forth with unclouded luſtre. It is true that no expoſition can effect theſe purpoſes: but as crude notions and unguarded expreſſions tend to increaſe the evils complained of; ſo a ſcriptural ſtatement of the matter may, by God's bleſſing, have ſome ſalutary effect in checking their progreſs.

It may be proper further to premiſe, that though the law, *ſtrictly ſpeaking*, contains in it no mention of mercy, and has no reference ro redemption; but is ſimply man's rule of duty as a rational creature, and God's rule of diſpenſing rewards to the obedient and inflicting puniſhments on tranſgreſſors: yet, as given to Iſrael for the foundation of their national covenant, it mentions the redemption out of Egypt, and the mercy which God had in ſtore for them. For we may conſider the giving of the law from mount Sinai, either as a publication to mankind of the law of their reaſon and nature, as originally written in their hearts, but eraſed or obſcured by ſin; which was intended in gracious ſubſerviency to the Goſpel, for the conviction and inſtruction of the Church in all ages; or as given to Iſrael for the rule and foundation of their national covenant. For want of adverting to this obvious diſtinction, it hath been incautiouſly aſſerted that the law itſelf was given only to the redeemed: which ſentiment not only ſuppoſes the reſt of God's univerſal kingdom without a law, but vacates redemption itſelf; for where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion, no condemnation, no occaſion for redemption. Thus men are driven to extremes: and whilſt ſome argue that the believer has in no ſenſe any thing to do with the law, becauſe redeemed from its curſe; others contend that none elſe have any thing to do with it, becauſe unable or indiſpoſed to obey it. "Do we then make void the law through faith? "God forbid: yea we eſtabliſh the law." (*Rom.* iii. 31). All rational creatures are bound by its authority; all tranſgreſſors are under condemnation by it: but Chriſt having fulfilled its righteouſneſs and borne its curſe; all, who hear the Goſpel are under a diſpenſation of mercy, and have forgiveneſs *propoſed* to them, all true believers are actually pardoned and juſtified; and all required, and inwardly diſpoſed to a ſincere, unreſerved, habitual obedience to the law, though not able to obey it perfectly.

V. 2. *I am the* LORD.] The great Lawgiver proclaims his eſſential glory and immutable excellency, as the foundation of his authority, and the reaſon of our obedience.—As the fountain of Being, and conſequently of all power, knowledge, wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and love, and the ſtandard of excellence and beauty, from which all created amiableneſs is an emanation, and of which it is a feeble reflection: to him alone the throne belongs; he alone is entitled, and qualified to be the Lawgiver and Judge of the univerſe; and he alone is worthy of that love and ſervice which his law demands.

Thy God.] This expreſſes our obligations, and thoſe of Iſrael, to the great Creator, as the name of JEHOVAH expreſſed his eſſential perfection. By him all were created; by him all are upheld, protected, and maintained; ſo that paſt and preſent benefits lay them under further obligations to obedience. Furthermore, the Iſraelites were the children of the covenant made with Abraham, had the external ſeal of circumciſion in their fleſh, had his glorious preſence amongſt them, and had juſt conſented to enter into covenant with him as their God: And profeſſing Chriſtians, dedicated to God in the external initiatory ordinance of baptiſm, favoured with the light of revelation, and calling themſelves his worſhippers, ſtand in a ſimilar relation to him.

Which have brought thee out, &c.] The recent deliverance of the Iſraelites from Egypt was ſuch a glorious diſplay of the divine power, and ſuch a ſpecial act of kindneſs, as laid them under additional obligations to obedience,

beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

5 Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf to them, nor ſerve them: for I the LORD thy God

dience, and afterwards rendered their diſobedience more inexcuſable. (*Iſaiah*, v. 1—8). This was a type of redemption from ſin and Satan, and the true people of God will conſider themſelves as peculiarly bound to obedience, and inexcuſable when they fail of it.

V. 3. *Thou ſhalt*, &c.] The commandments are delivered in the ſingular number to every individual; Chriſt teaches us to pray in the plural number, "Our Father "who art in heaven:" for obedience is demanded of us ſingly, but we ought to pray for others, even for all men. Several of the commandments are delivered in the form of prohibitions; yet they all imply a poſitive duty, which muſt be conſidered in explaining them. This firſt commandment implies the duty of an inward diſpoſition and an outward behaviour, ſuited to the relations in which we ſtand to Jehovah as our God. He alone is the adequate object of our affections: he alone can ſatisfy the capacities, with which he hath created us: all we are and have being derived from him, he poſſeſſes an unalienable right of directing the uſe which we ſhould make of our bodies, ſouls, and poſſeſſions. He has ſo clear a title to our love, gratitude, reverence, worſhip, ſubmiſſion, implicit credence, and obedience, that we cannot withhold them from him, or render them to any other, without the moſt palpable injuſtice. Conſidering WHO HE IS, and WHAT HE HATH DONE FOR US, except we love him ſupremely, to the utmoſt meaſure of our natural capacities, and with all the powers of our ſouls, we cannot be deemed to love him in a ſuitable manner at all. Did we love him with all our heart, mind, ſoul, and ſtrength, all contrary affections would be excluded, all other affections ſubordinated. Approving and admiring his excellency, deſiring and delighting in his favour, depending on his power, truth, and love, and being zealous for his glory, with all the energy of our whole ſouls; it is evident that our affections towards all other objects, would be exerciſed entirely for his ſake, according to his will and allowance, and in abſolute ſubordination. Filled with gratitude for the paſt, and ſatisfaction with the preſent, and fearing nothing but offending him; no creature could then rival God in the judgment and choice of our hearts, or prevail with us to diſobey his commands, or to neglect his delightful worſhip: And whilſt we rendered him his tribute of glory, he would be our portion and felicity: This is the reaſonable ſtate of things. Thus it hath ever been with holy angels; thus it will ever be with the redeemed in heaven; and all that is ſhort of this, or contrary to it on earth, is ſin, the effect of the fall, and evinces man a ruined creature.—With theſe things before our eyes, we ſhall be enabled with greater preciſion to ſtate the nature and extent of the prohibition before us. The diſlike, which the *unholy* heart of man has to the *holy* character, worſhip, and ſervice of God, connected with its blindneſs and pride, has in all ages betrayed the human ſpecies into the ſnare of Satan, and cauſed them to fall into idolatry. For man's reaſon and conſcience being diſſatisfied without ſome object of worſhip, and ſome ſort of religion; and his heart diſreliſhing the true God and his ſpiritual worſhip, he hath been eaſily induced to ſubſtitute deities and religious rites more ſuited to his own character and inclinations. Thus, to the diſgrace of the human underſtanding, groſs idolatry hath almoſt every where prevailed; and that ambitious proud ſpirit, who is the enemy of God and man, hath been gratified in the ſucceſs of his preſumptuous attempts to become, under theſe diſguiſes, the GOD OF THIS WORLD.—This worſhip of creatures is the grand offence here prohibited: whether they be creatures of God, or mere creatures of the human imagination. By rendering them religious worſhip, almighty power, omnipreſence, and other divine perfections, are aſcribed to them; the glory which belongs to God is given them; and that help and thoſe bleſſings are expected from them, which he alone can afford. Theſe idolatries of the heathens were continually imitated by the Jewiſh nation: and that divine worſhip, which the church of Rome enjoins to be paid to ſaints and angels, is as evident a violation of this commandment, as ever the Pagans were guilty of, and in ſome reſpects more aggravated. Far would I be from inſinuating that every one of that vaſt multitude, which forms the Roman church, is involved in this enormous guilt. It is, indeed, proper to proteſt againſt the idolatries and ſuperſtitions, which have been ſanctioned by the hierarchy of Rome, and I would lament that they are ſtill ſo *generally* complied with, throughout its dependencies: but the perſons of Papiſts I would leave to the judgment of God. Without here entering into the queſtion concerning the real exiſtence of witchcraft, it may be remarked, that all pretenſions to any thing of that nature; or to magic, fortune-telling, charms, aſtrology, or ſuch like methods of diſcovering future events, and obtaining protection or deliverance, are evident violations of this commandment; as in theſe ways men expect that information or aſſiſtance from other beings, which God alone can afford.—The commandment however is *ſpiritual*, and reaches much further. To love, deſire, delight in, or expect good from any ſinful indulgence, though in the ſmalleſt degree, is thereby prohibited: as alſo to ſuffer the moſt valuable and excellent creature to ſupplant, or rival God in our affections; which implies in proportion contempt of him. All atheiſm, infidelity, and irreligion, violate this commandment: for by theſe things men ſet up themſelves as gods, aſpire at independence, pretend to be ſufficient for their own happineſs, reject ſubordination, and refuſe to render homage, worſhip, love, or praiſe, to any ſuperior or benefactor: however moral, therefore, ſuch perſons may be in their conduct towards men, they are the rivals and enemies of God, and withhold, or even intercept his tribute. The proud man alſo is his own idol, and deifies, admires, loves, truſts in himſelf, and, as it were, burns incenſe, and offers ſacrifices at his own ſhrine; and expects others to do the ſame. The ambitious man makes a deity of the applauſe of men, of honourable appellations, and of domination over his fellow creatures. The revengeful

God *am* a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me:

6 And ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou

tions, and of domination over his fellow creatures. The revengeful man uſurps the throne of God, and attempts to wreſt the ſword of juſtice from his hand, that he may wield it himſelf. The covetous man deifies his wealth; which he ſupremely loves, deſires, delights in, depends on, and expects felicity from; and to it ſacrifices every nobler conſideration. The ſenſualiſt worſhips a group of filthier deities, than ever diſgraced a Pagan temple. The romantic lover's life and felicity are wrapt up in the ſmiles of the object of his idolatrous affection: his heaven is placed in her favour, and her frown determines him the moſt miſerable of creatures.—Nay the doating huſband, or the indulgent parent, by inordinate affection deifies the wife, or child, whom he ought to love tenderly, but in ſubordination to the love of God, and in ſubmiſſion to his will.

But the moſt copious comment cannot equal the breadth of this command. Whatever is inconſiſtent with, or comes ſhort of, that perfect love, gratitude, reverence, and worſhip, which have before been deſcribed, is a tranſgreſſion of it, and as ſuch expoſes us to condemnation.—In ſhort, it requires us to love God and all his creatures, according to their real worthineſs; not more nor leſs; except as a creature is incapable of worthily loving infinite excellency: and to put each in its proper place in our judgment and heart; the Lord upon the throne, and ourſelves and all other creatures in regular ſubordination; and to ſhew this in a correſpondent conduct.—But the violation of the commandment diſturbs this order, dethrones God in the heart, and allows ſome created object to uſurp his place.—Well may it ſtand foremoſt in the Decalogue: for obedience in this, would infallibly enſure it in all other reſpects. Tranſgreſſion in every caſe muſt injure the ſubject, and affront the Sovereign; but here it is high treaſon, which is the chief crime in all governments: no wonder therefore that it is called an abomination. Nor is it leſs injurious to man, who thereby forſakes the fountain of living waters, to hew out broken ciſterns which can hold no water: its reaſonableneſs, and excellency therefore are equal to its ſtrictneſs and ſpirituality; and without conformity to it in its fulleſt extent, the glory of God, and the felicity of rational creatures cannot be ſecured.—The words *before me*, mean either under the immediate inſpection of God, and with the manifeſtations of his glory before their eyes; which was eſpecially the caſe of Iſrael, both in the wilderneſs and in the promiſed land: Or they imply, that idolatry moſt abſurdly and wretchedly prefers the creature to the infinite Creator.

V. 4. *Thou ſhalt not make*, &c.] The ſecond commandment eſpecially requires, that the worſhip we render to the Lord our God be worthy of him, and honourable to him.—The perfections of God are inconceivable, his nature is incomprehenſible: nor can he poſſibly be repreſented by any ſimilitude.—The moſt exquiſite ſculpture or painting, and the moſt coſtly materials can only repreſent the *external reſemblance of a man*; but form no ſimilitude of the powers and capacities of his rational ſoul: How diſhonourable then muſt it be to the infinite God, to repreſent him by material images and pictures! Such devices, which have been almoſt univerſal in the world, are the reſult of the blindneſs of man's underſtanding, and of his low apprehenſions of God; which at the ſame time they tend exceedingly to increaſe.—Not only the direct worſhipping of the image or picture itſelf is forbidden; (for none except the moſt ſtupid of the heathens could be guilty of ſuch an abſurdity;) but alſo the repreſentation of the inviſible object of worſhip to the mind, through the medium of a viſible object preſented to the ſenſes:—nor have the Papiſts uſed any arguments in defence of their palpable violation of this commandment, which would not be equally plauſible in vindication of the worſhip of the golden calves, or of the image of Diana which fell down from Jupiter.—Pictures and ſtatues are not in themſelves unlawful; for by God's appointment they were uſed in the conſtruction of the tabernacle; though not to repreſent the object of adoration. But it is abſolutely prohibited to make any image or picture of the Deity, in any form, or for any purpoſe whatſoever: or to worſhip any creature, or any image or picture of it. By parity of reaſon all kinds of ſuperſtition are prohibited: that is the introduction of human inventions into the religious worſhip of God, as if they were eſſential to that worſhip, or rendered it acceptable to him.—The uſe of things indifferent in religion, without any command from God, has a natural tendency to fill men's minds with groſs apprehenſions of him, and to lead them to be delighted with external ſplendour in divine worſhip: as well as to draw off their dependence from the merits of Chriſt, and their attention from God's own ordinances and commandments, ſubſtituting ſomething elſe in the place of them, as of equal efficacy: and it has commonly iſſued in impoſing ſuch inventions upon the conſciences of others, and in perſecuting all who did not conform thereto.—But as many circumſtances of worſhip muſt be regulated by human diſcretion; and as it has not been found eaſy to fix exact limits to the exerciſe of that diſcretion: it ſeems ſufficient for the private Chriſtian to conſider ſeriouſly how far he complies with any thing which leads to the aforementioned evils in his own experience; and neither to attempt impoſing his ſentiments or practices upon others; nor yet deſpiſe, deride, cenſure, or judge thoſe who differ from him—All hypocriſy and formality are violations of this commandment, which ariſe from unworthy apprehenſions of God. And ſo are all unſcriptural delineations of the divine character:—Men, leaning to their own underſtanding, and forſaking the light of revelation; according to their own inclinations, and in their imaginations, frame an idea of the Deity: This creature of the fancy, which poſſeſſes not truth, juſtice, and holineſs; but is of too humane a diſpoſition to execute vengeance, or inflict puniſhment, they dignify with the title of the Supreme Being. This is the object of their love and worſhip; whilſt, like the Jews of old, who fancied they worſhipped the true God,

7 Thou ſhalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember

they are found haters of the Son of God, and of the Father that ſent him. (*John* xv. 23, 24.) And it will one day appear that theſe images, formed and ſet up in the heart, are as diſhonourable to God, as thoſe images which formerly were, and ſtill are throughout immenſe regions of the earth, ſet up in temples; and are not all his likeneſs, but his rivals.—In ſhort this commandment reaſonably requires us to collect our knowledge of the object of our worſhip, both in reſpect of his attributes and his mode of ſubſiſtance, from revelation, by faith; to form, and retain apprehenſions of him conformable to the ſcriptures; to preſent him to our our minds by *faith*, not by fancy; to worſhip him as a Spirit, not with groſs corporeal repreſentations of him in the mind, any more than with images of him before our eyes; in ſpirit, and in truth; inwardly and ſincerely, with honourable thoughts of his majeſty, purity, and excellency, and a realizing ſenſe of his knowledge of our hearts; in the ordinances which he hath appointed, in *all* of them, and in no other: for where he hath appointed to meet us, thither alone we ought to come, and may come *in faith*, and expect a bleſſing, being ſatisfied that God will account himſelf honoured by us. Finally this worſhip muſt be frequent, ſtated, habitual, and delightful to our ſouls.

Any likeneſs, &c.] All creatures being infinitely diſtant from the great Creator, all are alike improper to be uſed as a viſible repreſentation of his inviſible glory, and therefore equally prohibited. There are ſome devices, frequently uſed in pictures, as emblematic or repreſentative of the Trinity, which ſeem not to accord with the ſtrictneſs of this prohibition.

V. 5. *A jealous God*, &c.] In reſpect of idolatry, God is as tenacious of his honour that it be not given to another, eſpecially by any of his profeſſing people; as the huſband is jealous of the wife whom he ſuſpects of adultery. Every appearance of it, or approach to it, excites his indignation, and kindles his reſentment. Therefore every practice that looks like idolatry, or tends to it, ſhould be ſcrupulouſly avoided.

Viſiting the iniquity, &c.] It has already been obſerved that children actually do ſuffer, in the courſe of God's providence, for the ſins of their parents by neceſſary conſequence: and God declares that thus it ſhall be, in order to reſtrain us from wickedneſs, by working upon our natural affection for our children. But further, as idolatry was a breach of the national covenant made with Iſrael, and a forfeiture of its bleſſings, their poſterity would be ſure to ſuffer for their ſins: though the Lord's kindneſs and readineſs to forgive is expreſſed in the intimation, that this ſhould be only to the third and fourth generation; that is, in caſe the children did not perſiſt in imitating the example of their parents.

Them that hate me, &c.] The preference given by men to falſe gods, and to the works of their own hands, above the true God, is conſtrued into an hatred of him: and indeed the wife, who ſhould prefer every worthleſs ſtranger to her huſband, would be conſidered as even hating him. Thus the carnal mind is enmity againſt God; becauſe it chooſes worldly objects in preference to his favour.

V. 6. *Shewing mercy*, &c.] The law, as given to ſinners in ſubſerviency to the covenant of Grace, (as well as to Iſrael with reference to their national covenant,) makes mention of the mercy of God, though not properly belonging to its own nature; with an eſpecial reference to the character of God, diſplayed by that covenant, and in order to manifeſt how deſerving he is of that love and ſervice, which he claims from them as his unalienable right.—This mercy is extended unto thouſands, not only to vaſt multitudes, but ſucceſſive generations to the end of time. (*Deut.* vii. 9.) The Lord's dealings with the poſterity of Abraham, who believed his word, loved him, and kept his commandments with the upright obedience of faith, illuſtrates this promiſe.

V. 7. *Thou ſhalt not take*, &c.] If we take the Lord for our God, among other acts of worſhip, we ſhall be led to make vows unto him, and to ſwear by his name; and we ſhall have frequent occaſion to mention him in our daily converſation. Theſe things this third commandment regulates: and the ſum of it is this, that we take not the name of the Lord our God in vain: that is needleſsly, irreverently, profanely, or hypocritically.—This commandment therefore prohibits all raſh and unlawful vows; and vows which relate to things impracticable or uncertain: whether the vow be made immediately unto God, or whether it be in the form of a promiſſory oath unto man: and the violation of all ſuch vows as we have ſolemnly formed, if the ſubject be lawful, though it be very prejudicial to us: (*Pſalm* xv. 4.) Perjury of every kind is the moſt atrocious violation of it; for this is an appeal to the omniſcience of God for the truth of what we ſay, when we know it or ſuſpect it to be falſe, or do not know it to be true;—which is one of the moſt inſolent provocations of God that can be even conceived, though common amongſt us to a degree unknown in former ages. This again is the effect in great meaſure of other inſtances of diſregard to this commandment: namely the unneceſſary multiplication of oaths in all our judicial tranſactions, even upon the moſt trivial occaſions: and the ſhocking diſregard even to the appearance of reverence, in the general adminiſtration of oaths. For inſtance, the God of heaven is called to witneſs ten thouſand times in the year, that the dead body of a man or woman is wrapt up for burial in ſheep's wool only, with what propriety or ſolemnity, let experience and common ſenſe determine. To exclude perjury, oaths ſhould never be enjoined but on important occaſions; and never adminiſtered but with all the ſolemnity of an act of religious worſhip: and all that is inconſiſtent with this, by whomſoever appointed or executed, is "taking God's name in vain." All ſwearing in common converſation, or appealing to God, with ſuch expreſſions, as "God knows," &c; when the matter is not true, or not important; all profane curſing or ſwearing; all uſe of the words, GOD, LORD, or other expreſſions which

8 Remember the ſabbath-day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

10 But

which import the object of religious worſhip, without neceſſity, ſeriouſneſs, and reverence; whether we are diſcourſing *improperly* upon religious ſubjects; or whether they be uſed as mere expletives to complete a ſentence, or adorn a period, as notes of admiration, approbation, or indignation, are evidently violations of this commandment. All other expreſſions, which are of the nature of an oath, or imprecation, though the name of God be not uſed, fall under its condemnation: yea, whatever is more than yea, yea, nay, nay, in ordinary converſation.—All profane jeſting with the Word of God, and with ſacred things: all irreverence in reſpect of God, or any thing which relates to him, expreſſed in word or deed; all hypocriſy and formality in worſhip, when we profeſs to glorify God, but are aiming at ſome ſelfiſh end, are likewiſe violations of it. And it implies a command to us, to remember habitually the infinite majeſty, purity, and excellency of the God of heaven; and to behave towards him in word and deed, with that care and reverence, with which ſuch mean and worthleſs creatures ſhould be impreſſed in his preſence, and under his inſpection.

Will not hold him guiltleſs, &c.] Man may not diſcover, or he may neglect to puniſh the violations of this commandment; and the ſinner's conſcience may ſcarcely trouble him about them: but let him know that God will moſt certainly detect, and moſt ſeverely puniſh the affronts thus put upon him. For the heinouſneſs of the offence is proportionable to the reaſonableneſs of the precept, and the eaſineſs of obedience: and many tranſgreſſions of this commandment have no plea even of temptation; for there is no profit, honour, or pleaſure attainable by them; except it be an honour daringly to affront the Almighty, or a pleaſure to diſobey our Creator.

V. 8, 9.] The form of this fourth commandment intimates, that it was not now *firſt* given, but was previouſly known by the people; though they were very prone to forget it, and therefore needed being put in remembrance to keep holy the ſabbath-day: and we want reminding of the ſame duty.—It is evident that the obſervation of the ſabbath is of moral obligation, from its being inſerted in the very heart of the moral law: and it doubtleſs has its foundation in the nature of God and man, in the relations that we ſtand in to him and to each other, and in the obligations which thence ariſe. Circumſtanced as we are in this world, the glory of God and the beſt good of man, perſonal and ſocial, temporal and ſpiritual, indiſpenſably require the ſeparation of a portion of our time from worldly concerns, and the conſecration of it to the immediate ſervice and worſhip of the Lord.—Indeed the exact proportion and the particular time are matters of ritual inſtitution: but one day in ſeven ſeems to have been appointed by the divine wiſdom from the beginning, and is by experience evinced to be ſalutary and beneficial. And if one day in ſeven be the appointed proportion, *the day of the ſeven*, which ſhall be obſerved, is no ways eſſential to the moral obligation of the command, but is capable of being changed by the authority of the lawgiver: and it will hereafter be ſhewn that it hath actually been changed. The ſabbath among the Jews was no doubt alſo ceremonial in many things, and as ſuch forms a part of their ritual law: nay it is alſo inſerted in the judicial law, and the tranſgreſſion of it was puniſhable by the magiſtrate.—But we here are to conſider it as of moral obligation, and binding upon the conſciences of all men, eſpecially where revelation makes known that obligation; a part of that law of God, which is holy, juſt, and good; to the ſinner the miniſtration of condemnation and of death, written and engraven upon ſtones; (2 *Cor.* iii. 7—9;) to the believer a rule of duty, and a means of grace. One day in ſeven ſhould be remembered, that it may be kept holy: ſix days are allotted to the diligent performance of our ſecular buſineſs; yet we ought not to neglect the ſervice of God, and the care of our ſouls even on thoſe days; for all wordly buſineſs muſt be ſo ſubordinated and regulated, that it may be a part of our duty to God. On theſe days we muſt "do all our work," and leave none to be done on the ſabbath-day.—Chriſt hath expreſsly excepted works of neceſſity, of charity, and of piety; "for the ſabbath was made for man, "and not man for the ſabbath:" but certainly all works of covetouſneſs, diſtruſt, luxury, vanity, and ſelf-indulgence in any form are probibited; and we ſhould ſedulouſly contrive all our affairs, that there may be as little as poſſible of a worldly nature to engroſs our time, thoughts, or converſation on the Lord's day, or to interrupt its ſacred exerciſes.—Trading, paying wages, ſettling accounts, writing letters on common ſubjects, ſecular ſtudies, and other avocations of this nature, interrupt the ſacred reſt: pleaſures, diſſipation, trifling viſits, journeys, excurſions, or converſation, which have no further object than amuſement and relaxation, conſiſt not with keeping a day *holy* to the Lord: ſloth and indolence may be a carnal, but not a ſacred reſt. To comply with the intent of the inſtitution, the Lord's ſabbath ſhould be a reſt from worldly labour, and a reſt in the ſervice of God: A day of ſerious ſelf-examination, careful peruſal of the Scriptures, communion with God in our cloſet, ſocial worſhip with our families, diligent inſtruction of our children and ſervants, conſtant attendance upon the public ordinances of God, meditation and pious converſation. Theſe duties ſhould be early entered upon, and interrupted only by works of real neceſſity, or of Chriſtian charity. All this ſeems to be obligatory upon the conſcience, when we are maſters of our own time: but we cannot ſuppoſe that the Chriſtian ſlaves of Heathen maſters could thus hallow the Lord's day: yet they were directed to abide in their ſtation and to accommodate themſelves to it. The caſe of ſervants, with us, may frequently be in ſome meaſure the ſame; and they cannot properly avoid the *neceſſity* of doing many things on the Lord's day, which are not *neceſſary* in themſelves; though they ſhould prefer liberty of this kind to ſecular advantages, and contrive to have as little to do as poſſible. Were our love of God, and valuation of our ſouls and of ſpiritual things, vigorous as they ought to be, ſuch a day would be our delight, we would reckon of its approach, honour it, and be thankful for it, as our higheſt privilege; (*Iſaiah*, lviii. 13;) for heaven will be an eternal ſabbath. And all the objections

and

10 But the ſeventh day *is* the ſabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, thy man-ſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant, nor thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger that *is* within thy gates.

11 For

and excuſes, which men make to ſuch ſanctification of the Lord's day, ariſe from their diſreliſh of ſpiritual bleſſings, and their inordinate attachment to the things of time and ſenſe.—Whilſt the advantage which would accrue from ſuch an obſervation of this holy day, to the morals, health, liberty, and happineſs of the lower orders of mankind; and the effect which it would have in humanizing and civilizing them; as well as the opportunity thereby afforded, (by the ſuſpenſion of all ſecular employments), to all orders of men, of hearing the Word of God, and joining in his worſhip, of taking care of their own ſouls, and thoſe of their families; abundantly illuſtrate the reaſonableneſs, and excellency of the commandment, and the heinouſneſs of that almoſt univerſal violation of it, which marks the character of an irreligious age, and converts God's ordinance into an occaſion of ſtill increaſing licentiouſneſs.

V. 10. *Thou, nor thy ſon*, &c.] It is not enough, that we do not command our children and ſervants to perform needleſs worldly labour on the Lord's day; we ſhould not even allow them to do it; we muſt uſe our authority to reſtrain them from breaking the ſabbath; and not only give them time, but require them to employ it in the duties of the day.—And indeed attention to the ſpiritual benefit of families is one great deſign of the ſabbath and branch of hallowing it, with thoſe eſpecially, whoſe time is much engroſſed on other days by ſecular concerns.—The next reſtriction was added, that humanity to the brute creation might accompany piety to God and kindneſs to man; as well as more effectually to ſuſpend all kinds of labour.—Many things, generally practiſed among us, *ſeem* not to comport with this clauſe: but where to draw the line in a country, whoſe cuſtoms and habits of living are ſo vaſtly diſſimilar to thoſe of the Iſraelites, is a matter of extreme difficulty. The ſpirit and intention of the precept ſhould chiefly be conſidered; which are anſwered in the ſanctification of the ſabbath for the glory of God, the promotion of truth and righteouſneſs, and the real good of mankind; and this greatly conſiſts, in as general an attendance as may be of all ranks and orders of men on public worſhip. Whatever promotes theſe ends may be allowable: whatever interferes with it muſt be wrong: and ſtated needleſs travelling on the ſabbath ſhamefully interferes with it, as well as renders of none effect this humane clauſe. The labour of cattle, in huſbandry, manufactures, commerce, and journeys, ſeems, however, to be principally intended: and, *when neceſſary*, it may no more violate the command to uſe the ſlight labour of the cattle, in going to the place of worſhip, or to a work of charity, than the labour of walking thither: yet the true Chriſtian would wiſh to adhere to the letter of the prohibition, when it interfered not with the intention of it, though at the expence of parting with ſome ſelf-indulgence; but he would alſo be more diſpoſed to deny himſelf, than to preſcribe to, or cenſure others.—The ſtranger, though not of the ſame religion, was not only to be perſuaded and encouraged to hallow the ſabbath; but prohibited from externally violating its ſacred reſt, whilſt he reſided amongſt them; for this was the law of their land, as well as of religion. And though the government of Iſrael differed from that of other people: yet there ſeems a great propriety in nations profeſſing Chriſtianity making it a part of their law likewiſe.—But alas! it is grievous to ſay, that ſuch laws often loſe their energy, for want of being ſanctioned by the example of the legiſlators themſelves, and by that of thoſe whoſe office it is to put them into execution.

V. 11. *For in ſix days*, &c.] This was the original reaſon of the inſtitution of the ſabbath in honour of God our Creator: other reaſons are adduced elſewhere, which were peculiar to the Jews; and Chriſtians have ſtill higher and more cogent reaſons peculiar to themſelves, to be mentioned in due time.—Thus far is the firſt table of the law, which immediately relates to our duty to God: and theſe four commandments compriſe the whole of godlineſs ſtrictly ſpeaking; nor can any thing be conceived, external or internal, of thought, word, or deed, relating to the ſtate of our heart, and the regulation of our whole conduct, which falls not under one or other of theſe precepts.—They are evidently very extenſive and ſpiritual, and equally reaſonable and excellent: Yet they are the reverſe of the natural temper of our hearts, and of the general conduct of mankind; who are not diſpoſed thus to reverence, believe, love, truſt in, worſhip, obey, and ſubmit to the Lord; to delight in his ordinances, to reverence his name and word, and to hallow and take pleaſure in his ſabbaths. "Therefore, as many as are of the works of the law are "under a curſe:" Thus we all need mercy, forgiveneſs, and redemption; and muſt be born again, or we can never enter into the kingdom of heaven, where this holy law is perfectly obſerved in its grand import by every individual.—But we proceed to the ſecond table.

V. 12. *Honour thy*, &c.] According to the foregoing rules of interpretation, we conſider this commandment as the abſtract of relative duties. The relations of parents and children ſeem to be ſelected, as moſt reſembling the relation, in which we ſhould ſtand to our Creator.—If the father and mother be honoured; it is implied that they are required to do the duty of parents to their children: to take care of them; to provide for, and inſtruct them in both ſpiritual and temporal things; to ſet them a good example, and pray for them; to exerciſe authority over them, and kindneſs towards them; to adviſe, reſtrain, and correct them; and in ſhort to act *honourably* towards and before them, with ſuch wiſdom, gravity, and conſiſtency, as naturally to excite reverential affection towards their perſons and characters, in the breaſts of their children.—Not that a different conduct in the parents *diſcharges* the children from the obligation of honouring them: for it is a general rule, which admits of very few exceptions; that in relative life we ſhould perſevere in our duty as preſcribed by the Word of God, though the oppoſite relations totally fail of doing their duty to us. But the parents' duty is implied in this command to their children.——Theſe, deriving their very being under God from their parents, and having been from their entrance

11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou

entrance into the world taken care of, when they could not take care of themselves, and with much tenderness, and at the expence of much labour, pain, and sorrow; and being by God put under the authority and tuition of such kind friends; are reasonably required to perform unreserved obedience in all things *lawful*, whilst under the age of maturity; and ever after in all things *reasonable*, though they should not be *agreeable*. They are commanded to love their persons, and respect their characters, counsels, and instructions; to consult their interest, ease, credit, and comfort; by every possible means to requite their kindness; to maintain them if in their power, and if needful; nay even to labour for their subsistence, when unable through old age to maintain themselves, as the parent laboured for the child, when incapable through youth; to conceal their infirmities, to bear with their tempers, to accommodate themselves to their humours, and in every thing to endeavour alleviating their sorrows, and rejoicing their hearts. In some cases, the observance of such rules may be productive of hardship to a few individuals: but the general effect would be so very good, that these partial inconveniences would be unspeakably overbalanced, and the command shewn to be holy, just, and good.—By parity of reason, they who have acted the parent's part, are entitled in proportion to a parent's honour and respect from the adopted child. Every superior relation has a duty incumbent upon it, somewhat similar to that of the parent, and is entitled to a deference and respect not unlike the filial. Old age requires a grave and respectable demeanour before, and towards, young people; and is entitled to honour from them.—Magistrates have their several duties, and subjects also; ministers and people, masters and servants, husbands and wives; the rich and the poor have their reciprocal duties to each other: the superior relation is called upon to act *honourably*, and is entitled to *honour* from the inferior, according to particular precepts, which may all be referred to this fifth commandment, but must be considered elsewhere.—The commandment expresly mentions both Father and Mother—It is not enough to honour one parent, in opposition to, or at the expence of, the other, or allowable to neglect either of them; but both should be honoured alike, as alike nearly related. It is therefore the duty of parents to set their children an example of impartiality; and that by not preferring one child to another, they may teach them all not to prefer one parent to another: and they ought also to avoid whatever may excite competition, or lessen the children's respect to either of them; and to be harmonious in their education of them.—The annexed promise may have a particular reference to, and we may be sure that it had a remarkable accomplishment under, the national covenant made with Israel. Yet the apostle Paul quotes it in inculcating the same duty upon Christians. (*Eph.* vi. 1). And indeed careful observers of mankind have noted a peculiar blessing in temporal things on obedient, and the reverse on disobedient, children.

V. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*] This and the three next commandments comprise "the love of our neighbour as "ourselves," with reference to his person, his connexions his property, and his reputation. This relates to his person, and requires that we regard his life and safety as we do our own. It is certain that the prohibition admits of some restrictions: magistrates, as God's representatives, are in some cases commanded, and in others allowed, to take away the life of man; and many other persons, as witnesses, or executioners, may be accessory to it without sin. We may innocently take away a man's life in defence of our own; in some cases *perhaps* in defence of our property. Some wars are lawful, and the blood shed in them not murder, *in those who shed it*; though the guilt of murder must rest somewhere, and whoever be the unjust author, or cause, of war must be answerable to God for all the blood shed in it. The consent of the will is also requisite to constitute the crime here forbidden; and sometimes taking away life is a man's misfortune, not his sin: yet many actions denominated manslaughter by the laws of man, will be proved murder before a higher tribunal. The word of God no where extenuates the guilt of blood shed in furious passion excited by sudden provocation, or in intoxication: much more atrocious is the murder committed in duels, which is one of the most horrible effects of a haughty revengeful spirit. The duellist, in contempt of God's authority, and of his patience and readiness to forgive, will accept of no satisfaction for the most trivial offence, but the life of the offender; in seeking which he madly risks his own. All fighting, whether for wages, for renown, or out of anger and malice, are violations of this command, and the blood shed is *murder*.—Whatever doth take away, by force, or stratagem, or may take away, the life of man is prohibited: all the blood shed in persecutions and oppressions, whether under the colour, or in defiance of, law and justice, will be required: yea they, who should punish the murderer, but let him escape, must answer for it, whether they be individuals, or collective bodies. To assault, maim, or wound others, or assist those that do; to tempt men to such crimes as either destroy their constitutions, or expose their lives to danger, from the sword of justice, or the resentment of an injured party; nay, to persuade people with the prospect of a large recompence to such enterprises and labours, as are known in general to destroy their lives, are violations of this commandment. They who misbehave so grosly, as to break the hearts, and shorten the lives of parents, wives, or other relations, will not be held guiltless: nor they, who in revenge, or out of covetousness, *wish* for the death of others. The spiritual extent of this commandment reaches also to the prohibition of all envy, malice, hatred, or anger, without

14 Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.
15 Thou ſhalt not ſteal.
16 Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.
17 Thou

or above cauſe; all that reproachful, inſulting language, which provokes to anger, and murder; and all that pride, ambition, and covetouſneſs which prompt to it. He that hateth his brother is a murderer: and he will be adjudged to hate his brother, who ſeeing his life or health endangered by the want of food, medicine, raiment, or lodging, and having the ability of relieving him, ſo loves himſelf as to refuſe his aſſiſtance; (1 *John*, iii. 15—17). But if, whatever tends to the deſtruction of the temporal life be ſo heinous, what ſhall we ſay to the murder of the ſoul? This is done by ſeducing and enticing our neighbour to ſin, by ſetting evil examples, diſſeminating poiſonous principles, or terrifying men from God's ſervice by reproaches or threatenings; or by withholding thoſe inſtructions, warnings, and counſels, which we all owe to our neighbour in ſome caſes, but eſpecially parents to their children, and miniſters to their people. It is tremendous to reflect upon the multitudes, whoſe blood will in this ſenſe be required of their murderers.—But is the deſtruction of our own life excepted from this rule? By no means. We are no more the authors, or lords, of our own life, than of the life of others: nor may we any more leave our aſſigned poſt of ſervice, or ruſh uncalled into the preſence of our judge; than we may execute vengeance for ourſelves, and ſend a fellow creature to that awful tribunal. Self-murder is a complication of ingratitude and contempt of God's gift, even our life, and of defiance, impatience, pride, rebellion, and unbelief; perhaps it is the moſt malignant of all murders, and it can ſcarcely ever be repented of. Nor is it any thing like ſo commonly the effect of inſanity, as verdicts might perſuade us, (in which perjury is often thoughtleſsly committed out of falſe tenderneſs) except as all in ſome ſenſe may be ſaid to be inſane, who are hurried on by the inſtigation of Satan, that murderer from the beginning. He knows that our preſent life is an invaluable talent, which admits of precious improvement, and is eſpecially the ſeaſon allotted to ſeek the ſalvation of our ſouls: he is therefore aiming to ſhorten our period, both by tempting men to direct ſuicide, and by leading them to thoſe exceſſes which ruin the conſtitution, or to thoſe extravagances which render life miſerable; that he may the more advantageouſly deſtroy both body and ſoul at once. Theſe things therefore ought to be avoided; diſcontent and deſpondency repreſſed; and gratitude, patience, and hope cultivated, that we may defeat his malignant purpoſe. In fine, this commandment requires a ſpirit of enlarged benevolence to the bodies and ſouls of all men; a diſpoſition to bear and ſuffer long, and to be kind; to forgive, and do good againſt evil, and to endeavour to preſerve the life, to prolong the comforts, and to ſave the ſouls of every human being.

V. 14. *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.*] This commandment is the regulation of our "love to our neigh-"bour as ourſelves," as it reſpects the purity and comfort of domeſtic life: and it requires the proper government of thoſe inclinations, which God hath implanted in our nature for the propagation of the human ſpecies; that we may neither debaſe and defile our own bodies and ſouls, nor injure others in their chaſtity or connexions: "But that we may poſſeſs our veſſel in ſanctifi-"cation and honour, not in the luſt of concupiſcence." Marriage "is *honourable* among all men, and the bed un-"defiled." But, the original inſtitution, with the intention, and ends of marriage, muſt be kept in view; if we would with preciſion aſcertain the extent of this prohibition. The original inſtitution was, one man and one woman, made one fleſh, inſeparably united to be helps meet for each other, to promote and ſhare in each other's comforts and ſatisfactions; to contribute by ſuitable ſociety and tender friendſhip to their mutual felicity; and with united attention to educate their common offſpring. The entrance of ſin and its fatal effects ſoon marred this felicity, made way for the diſſolution of this union, gave occaſion to a variety of evil paſſions and much miſconduct which embittered the relation, and introduced many abuſes. But theſe are not to be conſidered as any part of marriage: for they are the effects of ſin; and whether permitted, connived at, or prohibited in the word of God, would not otherwiſe have exiſted. Chriſt repeatedly refers to the original appointment of marriage, in anſwering queſtions on that ſubject; and by this we ſhould judge of it, according to the ſpiritual meaning of the moral law of God, and the pure nature of the Chriſtian religion. Yet the entrance of ſin has introduced ſome *circumſtantial* alterations; the force, which man's paſſions have acquired ſince the fall, has rendered the *prevention of fornication* one expreſs end of marriage: the imperfection of every human character has rendered mutual forbearance, and compliance in matters not always reaſonable, a neceſſary duty of the conjugal relation; whilſt the ſorrows and miſeries of life render it requiſite, that in the married ſtate, each party ſhould ſhare and ſoften the afflictions, as well as participate the comforts of the other. Conſidering marriage in this light, and keeping the intentions of this inſtitution in view, we ſhall be the better able to judge of this commandment under conſideration. We need not be exact in defining the term Adultery: according to the judicial law of Moſes, the commerce of any man with a married woman, or one betrothed, was called adultery, and puniſhable by the death of both parties; but the commerce of a married man with an unmarried woman was not viewed in the ſame light: yet under the New Teſtament this crime alſo is called by that name. (*Matt.* xix. 9. *Mark* x. 14). And certainly both the one and the other are violations of this ſpiritual commandment; both militate againſt the ends and intentions of marriage, are inconſiſtent with that union of hearts and intereſts which it implies, are breaches of the marriage compact, mar domeſtic peace, prevent the harmonious agreement in training up children, and form an alienation of that property, which both huſ-band

17 Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-ſervant, nor his maid-ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

18 And

band and wife have in the perſons and affections of the other, which is ſcarcely ever loſt without the bittereſt anguiſh, and the keeneſt reſentment. (1 *Cor.* vii. 1. 4). It is true, adultery on the woman's ſide is *more generally* chargeable with the injuſtice of introducing a ſpurious offspring to inherit the huſband's property: but *his* infidelity is not ſeldom productive of a ſimilar effect, when the huſband has the diſpoſal of that which was the property of the wife. And though jealouſy be eſpecially "the rage of man," and produces the moſt fatal effects; yet ſometimes female paſſions overpower female timidity, and dreadful conſequences enſue on that ſide alſo. So that in the impartial judgment even of reaſon the difference of the injury, and of its effects, in the two caſes is not very great.—Theſe are the more atrocious violations of this precept, and are inconceivably more pernicious to ſociety than theft: though that be puniſhed with death, and theſe eſcape almoſt without cenſure. All other commerce betwixt the ſexes, except in lawful and avowed marriage, are alſo prohibited by this commandment, under whatever names they may be diſtinguiſhed; from the temporary connexions which are formed and diſſolved at pleaſure, to the loweſt ſcenes of common proſtitution. There are different degrees of malignity in them; they may be more or leſs pernicious; and the diſtinction betwixt the TEMPTER and the TEMPTED will ever be important, and mark the ſeducer's character *diabolical*: but all claſs under the general words Whoredom, and Fornication, which are almoſt in every black catalogue in the Bible, in which the perſons are enumerated, who ſhall not enter into the kingdom of God. (1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. *Gal.* v. 19.—21. *Eph.* v. 3—6. *Col.* iii. 5. 6. *Rev.* xxii. 8. xxii. 15). And, however men may deceive themſelves and others by vain words; the horrible effects of theſe crimes upon the peace, comfort, morals, and health of mankind; the dreadful havock made by them among the human ſpecies, which is *vaſtly* beyond the conception of ſuch perſons as have not enquired into the ſubject; the connexion which they have with, and the introduction which they form to, all other vices, will ever illuſtrate not only the holineſs and juſtice, but alſo the *goodneſs*, of that law, which ſo peremptorily forbids them, and ſo awfully denounces the wrath of God againſt thoſe who are guilty of them.—Nor muſt we ſtop here: under one word, *laſciviouſneſs*, is comprehended a variety of ſhameful practiſes, which could not be enumerated without offence, and cannot be thought of without abhorrence. All theſe fall under the prohibition before us, as utterly inconſiſtent with reaſon, purity, the true dignity of the rational nature, and the intention of God in forming us as we are; and exceedingly prevent the increaſe of human ſpecies: Nay every thing, which comports not with the ends and intentions of marriage, though ſanctioned by that honourable name, will be found inconſiſtent with the ſpirituality of the commandment before us. All that converſation, by which the filthineſs of an impure heart is vented, and communicated to others; all polluted imaginations, ſpeculative wantonneſs, and lewd deſires are likewiſe prohibited; "ſo "that he who looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath "committed adultery with her already in his heart." Writing, publiſhing, vending, propagating, or reading obſcene books; forming, or expoſing to view, indecent pictures or ſtatues, or whatever elſe tends to pollute the imagination, or fire the paſſions, muſt fall under this prohibition. In all theſe caſes, not only the groſſer outrage againſt modeſty is ſinful; but that which is more covert, and inſinuating, which is perhaps of ſtill more fatal tendency. Nor will the wit, elegance, or ingenuity of the performance at all palliate the matter: it is poiſon, and at leaſt no better for being conveyed in an unſuſpected or agreeable vehicle, whether in the parlour, from the preſs, on the theatre, or at the muſeum. Whatever inſpires the wanton thought, or excites the dormant deſire after a forbidden object, violates the ſpirit of this command. Yea all the arts of dreſs, motion, converſation, or demeanour, which are not conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt rules of decency, but have a tendency to throw temptations in the way of heedleſs youth; all that ſoft inſinuation, and thoſe amorous looks, expreſſions, and dalliances, which ſubſerve the vile art of ſeduction, in either ſex; (for it is not excluſively the ſin of either;) and whatever in the moſt remote degree leads to the groſſer evil here forbidden, is in that degree a violation of the ſeventh commandment. For this requires the utmoſt purity of imagination, heart, converſation and behaviour, in ſecret as well as before the eyes of men; and the utmoſt ſuperiority of the rational ſoul to the animal appetite, not only reſtraining men from forbidden indulgences, but producing a holy indifference about, a moderation in, and a regard to expediency reſpecting, thoſe which are moſt honourable: and moreover the deſire and endeavour of preſerving the ſame diſpoſition and behaviour in all others, as far as we are connected with them; avoiding every expreſſion and action, which may counteract this deſign, and adopting ſuch language and behaviour as may promote it. And how much this would conduce to the true honour and felicity of the human ſpecies in this world, ſubſerve religion, and promote the ſalvation of the ſouls of men in another world, need not be ſaid. This is the law of God, imperfectly expounded: the tranſgreſſion of it is ſin, and the wages of ſin is death.

V. 15. *Thou ſhalt not ſteal.*] This commandment is the law of love, as it reſpects our neighbour's property. The earth is given to the children of men: but the productions thereof are obtained, and fitted for uſe, by labour; labour gives property, and property deſcends to the children or heirs of the poſſeſſor. Hence ariſes that difference in circumſtances which prevails; and which ſhould be conſidered as the appointment of God, and ſubmitted to accordingly. The portion of worldly things allotted to us, as far as it is obtained in any honeſt way, "is the bread, "which God hath given us;" For that we ought to be thankful, with it contented, and, in the uſe of lawful means, to truſt Providence for the future. But unbelief, pride,

18 And all the people ſaw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noiſe of the trumpet, and the mountain ſmoking: and when the people ſaw it, they removed, and ſtood afar off.

19 And

pride, covetouſneſs, and luxury cannot thus be ſatisfied; and ſloth refuſes to labour. Such diſpoſitions therefore prompt men to employ force or fraud, and all the arts of ingenious deceit, to obtain poſſeſſion of the property of others, without their conſent, fairly and honeſtly obtained. Theſe things however modified are the objects of this prohibition. Human laws forbid, and human tribunals puniſh, various tranſgreſſions of this commandment, which need not be enumerated: we may, however, obſerve that they will alſo, except repented of, be puniſhed in another way, as diſobedience to the law of God, whether the ſword of human juſtice reach them or not. But there are innumerable ways of evading the laws of man, or eſcaping human juſtice, whilſt the law of God is violated. Many fraudulent bargains, by which the ignorance, credulity, or neceſſity of others are impoſed upon; much abuſe of confidence, extortion, exorbitant gain, deceitful combinations to enhance the price of goods, or to lower the wages of the poor, will be condemned as traſgreſſions of God's law, though perhaps ſcarcely deemed cenſurable in ſociety. Many an overgrown plunderer of provinces and kingdoms, and oppreſſor of millions, who ſmiles defiance at human juſtice, will ſink under the ſentence of the Judge of the earth, in horror and deſpair. The plunder of the public, whether by oppreſſive rulers and exorbitant exactions, or by ſmuggling, evading taxes, and ſuch like methods of increaſing wealth, will one day be brought to account: as will the practice of contracting debts for the ſupport of vanity and luxury, or for any thing not abſolutely neceſſary, without a fair proſpect of paying them; and thoſe advantages which perſons, once inſolvent, take of humane ſtatutes, to evade paying juſt debts, when afterwards they *become* able to do it. Nay all extravagance, beyond the prudent allowance of our income, is robbery of our families; and ſlothfulneſs, or *unneceſſary* ſubſiſtence upon charity, is robbery of the public, or of its beſt members: and with-holding from real objects of compaſſion that relief, which they are entitled to, or ſqueezing the poor down ſo low in their wages, as ſcarcely to allow them to ſubſiſt, whilſt we live in affluence, muſt be allowed to violate its ſpiritual meaning. In ſhort the commandment excludes covetouſneſs, luxury, and the pride of life; and requires induſtry, frugality, ſobriety, temperance, ſubmiſſion to God's providence, and that indifference about worldly things, which produces content and thankfulneſs for the meaneſt proviſion; and a diſpoſition "to do to all others" in reſpect of worldly property, "as we would they ſhould do unto us." And how reaſonable this is in itſelf, as well as conducive to the felicity of man, is evident to every one.

V. 16. *Thou ſhalt not*, &c.] This commandment is the law of love, as it reſpects the reputation of our neighbour; though ſuch is the connexion of cauſes and effects in the actions of men, that the violation of it may alſo deſtroy his life or property, or ruin his relative comfort. Nay bearing falſe witneſs among us in a court of juſtice may be a complication of perjury, robbery, ſlander, and murder, if not of other crimes. In ſuch important concerns how careful ſhould we be, that we teſtify nothing, of which we are *not certain!* that we ſuffer not partially, prejudice, ſelf-intereſt, or any other human paſſion to warp our evidence, or give it a falſe colouring! How circumſpect and exact ſhould we be even to a word, if poſſible, in reporting what we know; and in ſpeaking the truth, the whole truth, and no more than the truth! Equal caution and circumſpection are requiſite in thoſe, who compoſe juries, and bring in the verdict; and in the judge, who ſums up the evidence and pronounces the ſentence. In all theſe caſes there is danger of breaking this commandment, in connexion with many others, and in the moſt atrocious manner.—Next to this we may rank the malicious invention and propagation of falſe reports, in order to injure the reputation, the intereſt, or the comfort of our neighbour: nor is it much leſs criminal when it is done in ſport, as the madman throws about arrows, firebrands, and death. Neither ought we to ſpread ſuch reports as have already been framed, if we know, or ſuſpect, them to be falſe or aggravated: nay, though we are ſure that they are ſtrictly true, if we have no *good reaſon* for circulating them, we ſhall contract guilt by ſo doing: nor is it eaſy to adduce a *good reaſon* for diſſeminating an injurious report, except the detection of a hypocrite be neceſſary, that others may not be deceived by him; or that of a maſked villain, that they may be upon their guard againſt him. Such caſes excepted, the practice of ſpreading diſadvantageous ſtories of others is the reſult of proud ſelf-preference, of malevolence, which takes pleaſure in diſgracing and torturing others; or of conceited affectation of wit, which diſregards all conſequences in ſeeking admiration. All calumnies, ſlanders, reproaches, ſevere cenſures, and pointed ſarcaſms, which hold up an individual to contempt and ridicule, however ingenious, and applauded, will be condemned as violations of this commandment: and ſo will the diſpoſition as to aſcribe, without evidence, an inoffenſive or good action to a corrupt motive, to put the worſt conſtruction upon a doubtful one, or to enhance the malignity of a bad one: and all the *innuendos*, and miſrepreſentation, whereby the baſe trade of back-biting is carried on; and by which anecdotes are picked up in one family to furniſh matter of converſation in another, which may gratify the malevolence or curioſity of ſuch perſons, as ſeem to confeſs themſelves incapable of more rational diſcourſe. Much tranſgreſſion of this commandment is found in books of religious controverſy; (as well as in other books, for a lie or a ſlander is much worſe, when printed and publiſhed, than when only ſpoken), and in converſation about religion: for the *bigots* of all ſects and parties are agreed in bearing falſe witneſs againſt their opponents; in miſſtating facts, miſreporting words, and miſquoting books. This is a moſt ſhameful offence, and cannot be too ſeverely reprobated and proteſted againſt by all friends to true religion, which is thus expoſed to the ſcorn of its enemies. All lies, however diſtinguiſhed or denominated, are

19 And they ſaid unto Moſes, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die.

20 And Moſes ſaid unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye ſin not.

21 And

claſs amongſt the violations of this commandment: and are always an abuſe of the gift of ſpeech, an abuſe of the confidence of thoſe whom we addreſs, and generally one way or other injurious to our neighbours: they are therefore without diſtinction condemned in the word of God. Even injurious thoughts, groundleſs ſuſpicions, and ſecret prejudices, or envy of the praiſes and commendations which others receive, conſiſt not with the ſpirit of this precept: which implies a requiſition of ſincerity, truth, fidelity, candour, and caution, in our whole diſpoſition, converſation, and conduct; that we love our neighbour as ourſelves, and ſhew that love by honouring what is honourable, commending what is commendable, vindicating and excuſing what can be vindicated and excuſed, and concealing what may lawfully be concealed; and in every reſpect conſulting his reputation, and even rejoicing in his credit and renown, as we ſhould were it our own, and might reaſonably deſire he alſo ſhould. In our own caſe we all feel the excellency and reaſonableneſs of the precept in its ſtricteſt ſenſe; we value and are tender of our reputation; we expect to be treated with candour, reſpect, and ſincerity; and we are greatly pained and affronted, when we are impoſed upon, or held forth to ſcorn, ridicule, and cenſure, by the tongues or pens of others. But through the exorbitancy of ſelf-love, and the deficiency of our love to others, we are prone in an amazing degree to violate the ſame rules, in reſpect of our neighbour, without much remorſe, or ſenſe of guilt! Nor can words expreſs how much this reaſonable commandment is every day tranſgreſſed in almoſt every company, and amongſt perſons of all characters.

V. 17. *Thou ſhalt not covet*, &c]. This laſt commandment is intended to be the fence of all the reſt: that by attending to it we may be kept at a diſtance from the violation of the others; as the Iſraelites were kept at a diſtance from Mount Sinai by the boundaries, which were placed about it. The apoſtle quotes it as compriſing the utmoſt ſpirituality of the law; and as that requirement which eſpecially tends to ſhew the convinced ſinner the depravity of his heart, the inſufficiency of his obedience, and the deceitfulneſs of all his former hopes. (*Rom.* vii. 7, 8). Hence it may be inferred, that it was alſo annexed as a rule of explication to all the reſt; and Chriſt hath mentioned one ſpecies of *concupiſcence*, or coveting, as a violation of the ſeventh commandment. (*Matt.* v. 28). Indeed it has been the manner of men in all ages to reſt in the mere letter of the commandments, and, if not chargeable with the groſs wickedneſs prohibited by them, to think or ſay, "all theſe have I kept from my youth:" but the tenth commandment ſtands in the law itſelf as a direct confutation of ſuch explications, and as direct a ſanction of the more ſpiritual and extenſive expoſition.—Nor is it at all material which commandment our conduct tranſgreſſes, if it be evidently condemned by the law of God. Many things therefore, which have been adduced in the interpretation of the other commandments, might here again be mentioned: but the repetition would be needleſs. We muſt not covet any thing which the law of God forbids, or which the providence of God with-holds: the leaſt deſire of a forbidden object is coveting; the *inordinate* deſire of the object, which might lawfully be poſſeſſed, is the ſame.—The firſt motion of deſire, the moſt ſecret wiſh, for the wife of another man, is a violation of the precept; but the deſire of an union with an unmarried woman, who is not pre-engaged, is only forbidden when it becomes inordinate: becauſe the object of the former deſire is unlawful, that of the latter lawful in itſelf; though there may be circumſtances which render the deſire equally ſinful, becauſe it is evidently impracticable to indulge it by lawful means. That part of our neighbour's property, which he may with propriety part from, and expreſſes an intention to diſpoſe of, we may innocently deſire upon fair and equitable terms: but if he be averſe to part with his poſſeſſion, though for a valuable conſideration, we cannot continue to deſire it, without violation of this commandment. The deſire of obtaining a part of our neighbour's property in a way, which were the circumſtances reverſed, it would be fair and reaſonable for him to deſire a part of our ſubſtance, is not coveting. The moderate deſire of relief from the affluence of a rich man, in the breaſt of one really in want, is no tranſgreſſion of this commandment, though he propoſe no valuable conſideration in lieu of it.—By parity of reaſon, men, embarking in an equally hazardous enterprize, may agree to contribute certain proportions of their ſubſtance to relieve the diſtreſs, or compenſate the loſs, which any one of them in that undertaking may ſuſtain, without coveting the property of the others: becauſe this is ſimply an agreement to relieve mutually each other's diſtreſſes, ſhould the one be diſtreſſed and the other exempted, which is the law of love: and this will exculpate inſurance from the charge of violating this precept, if it be fairly and honeſtly tranſacted.—But ten perſons cannot ſtake a ſum of money each, to caſt lots for the whole, without coveting their neighbour's property, and ſeeking to poſſeſs it in a way contrary to the law of love: for each muſt deſire to enrich himſelf by impoveriſhing the others, and to obtain their property in a way, that he would not, without hopes of winning, riſk to part with his own. This will evidently conclude all gaming, public as well as private, to be a tranſgreſſion of this commandment.—It perfectly agrees with the law of love, to deſire and accept a proportion of our neighbour's abundance to make up our loſs, and to relieve our diſtreſs: but it is directly contrary to it to deſire, and ſeize upon his ſubſtance, to enrich ourſelves by impoveriſhing him. The former is the caſe of inſurances, the latter of gaming and lotteries: for that which is right or wrong when two or ten are concerned, is equally right or wrong when millions concur in it: and the extenſive miſchief, that follows from lotteries, evinces them to be the very worſt ſpecies of gaming. — In fine, diſtruſt, diſcontent, ambition, covetouſneſs, ſelf-love, love of the world, love of pleaſure,

21 And the people ſtood afar off, and Moſes drew near unto the thick darkneſs where God *was*.

22 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Thus thou ſhalt ſay unto the children of Iſrael, ye have ſeen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye ſhall not make with me gods of ſilver, neither ſhall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 An altar of earth thou ſhalt make unto me, and ſhalt ſacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy ſheep and thine oxen: In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee.

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of ſtone, thou ſhalt not build it of hewn ſtone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou haſt polluted it.

26 Neither ſhalt thou go up by ſteps unto mine altar, that thy nakedneſs be not diſcovered thereon. CHAP.

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envy, deſire of change, and the habit of wiſhing and inordinately ſeeking for any earthly object, or the indulgence of any paſſion in the human heart, are the evils againſt which this precept is directed: as indeed they are the great ſources of all the wickedneſs that fills the earth, which would be repreſſed were theſe ſubdued, and ceaſe were they extinguiſhed. And it requires that indifference about the ſucceſs of our worldly undertakings, and that moderation about worldly objects, which becomes men whoſe buſineſs it is to do the will of God, and whoſe happineſs it is to enjoy his favour, without looking any further.—This is right and reaſonable, fit for God to command, and profitable for man to obey, the very temper and felicity of heaven itſelf: but it is ſo contrary to the diſpoſition of our heart by nature, and ſo ſuperior to the actual attainment of the beſt chriſtians on earth; that it is hard to perſuade people in general, that God requires ſuch perfection; ſtill harder to ſatisfy them, that it not only conſiſts with, but is indiſpenſable, to the happineſs of the rational creature; and hardeſt of all to convince them, that every thing inconſiſtent with, or ſhort of, this *is ſin*, the wages of which is death. Yet this is the evident doctrine of the Bible; and conviction of it is the very preparation for underſtanding and valuing the Grace of the Goſpel of our ſalvation, in any meaſure ſuitable to its nature and precioufneſs.

Thy neighbour's houſe, &c.] The things here mentioned were thoſe, which were moſt commonly coveted amongſt the Iſraelites; and they imply all poſſible objects of concupiſcence.—Thus we cloſe the ſecond table of the law: and we find in it nothing injurious, defective, or redundant; nothing which could be altered, added, or retrenched, without marring the perfection of the whole, and allowing of thoſe things, which are inconſiſtent with perſonal, relative, and ſocial felicity.—'Lord have mercy upon us, (for-'giving all our paſt tranſgreſſions), and write all theſe 'thy Laws in our hearts we beſeech thee. Amen.'

V. 19. *Speak thou*, &c.] By this requeſt the people confeſſed that they wanted a Mediator, and that they could not in their own perſons ſtand before the holy God, according to this ſpiritual law: "for they could not endure "the things, which were ſpoken." But it was rather the language of their terrors and preſent feelings, than of their judgment. It however ſhews us our real condition; and in this whole tranſaction Moſes typified, that "Prophet "like unto himſelf" whom he predicted.

V. 20. *Fear not, for God*, &c.] Moſes encouraged the people not to fear immediate deſtruction: for theſe awful diſplays were intended for their conviction and humiliation, not for their condemnation; and in connexion with the Goſpel, to put them upon trial, and to evince who was and who was not diſpoſed to obey, when properly warned, encouraged, and inſtructed; and at the ſame time to impreſs them with reverential fear, which is connected with love and promotes obedience. This is totally different from that ſervile fear, which is connected with enmity, produces deſpondency, and leads to further ungodlineſs:—unleſs the juſtice and holineſs of God, and the ſeverity of his law, be viewed in connection with the Goſpel; and this terror be mitigated by hope, and this enmity ſupplanted by the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt.

V. 24. *An altar of earth*, &c.] That is of the meaneſt materials; as God reſpected principally the faith, humility, and holineſs of the offerer, next to Jeſus whom the ſacrifices typified. The Lord recorded his name in the tabernacle and temple, which were built according to his command, and dedicated to him. In like manner he records his name in all the ordinances, which he hath appointed as means of grace to us, and of honourable worſhip to himſelf.

V. 25. *Liſt up a tool*, &c.] Theſe reſtrictions were intended to keep the people at a diſtance from the idolatries and ſuperſtitions of the Heathens; and from attempting to pleaſe God by human inventions, or by external ſplendour in his worſhip. But the temple, altar, and ſacrifices repreſented Chriſt's atonement and righteouſneſs, to which as the meritorious ground of our acceptance we can attempt to add nothing, without offending God, and precluding our own juſtification, or at leaſt our comfortable ſenſe of it.—Theſe rules were given with reference to the occaſional altars, on which the people ſhould offer ſacrifice, till the ceremonial law were given, in which we find another kind of altar preſcribed.

V. 26. *Leſt thy nakedneſs*, &c.] The Heathen worſhip was attended by ſhameful indecencies, from which the Lord would keep his people at the utmoſt diſtance; and as they wore looſe garments, this precaution was very proper.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though we hear not the thunders, ſee not the lightnings, nor witneſs the awful circumſtances, with which

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Laws concerning 1st. The releaſe, or detention of Hebrew ſlaves, v. 1—5. 2d. The treatment of female ſlaves, v. 6—11. 3d. Murder, manſlaughter, the ſmiting or curſing of parents, maiming any perſon, killing or wounding a ſlave, hurting of women with child, &c. v. 12—27. 4th. Miſchiefs occaſioned by cattle, or by pits, v. 28—36.

NOW theſe *are* the judgments which thou ſhalt ſet before them.

2 If

this holy law was given; nor yet hear the voice of God pronouncing theſe words: yet if we will attend to the things, which were then ſpoken, and in which we are equally concerned, we ſhall perceive, that we have as much occaſion to tremble for ourſelves, as ever Iſrael had before mount Sinai. This law, which is ſo extenſive that we cannot meaſure it, ſo ſpiritual that we cannot evade it, and ſo reaſonable that we cannot find fault with it, will be the rule of the future judgment of God, as it is of the preſent conduct of man. Nor would it conſiſt with the glory of the divine perfections, the honour of his government, the intereſts of his univerſal and everlaſting kingdom, or even with the felicity of any of his rational creatures, to reverſe, repeal, or relax one precept of it; for it is all perfectly "holy, juſt, "and good." Compared with its ſpiritual requirements, we ſee moſt evidently that man is a fallen ruined creature; for his character, diſpoſition, and conduct, ſo far from being conformable to it in full perfection, is the very contrary; "the carnal mind of man is enmity againſt God; for "it is not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." Examined by this rule our whole paſt lives appear to be a continued ſeries of tranſgreſſions; our beſt actions to be all defective in their principle, end, and meaſure, and defiled with ſin; and our judgment, will, and affections, the reverſe of what they ought to be: and while we behold ourſelves in this mirror, we cannot but uſe the language of the prophet "We are all as an unclean thing, and all "our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags." (*Iſaiah*, lxiv. 6). Having thus obtained ſome acquaintance with the number of our tranſgreſſions, and with the ſinfulneſs of our fallen nature; we may further perceive our danger when we read ſuch words as theſe "curſed is *every one*, that conti-"nueth not in *all* things, which are written in the book "of the law to do them." (*Gal.* iii. 10.); which curſe Chriſt expounds, when he declares that he will ſay to thoſe on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye *curſed*, into "everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil, and his angels:" and adds, "theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſh-"ment." (*Matt.* xxv. 41—46). And when we have impartially conſidered the excellency of every commandment, we ſhall gradually be conſtrained to approve of the law, to allow of the evil of tranſgreſſion, and to perceive a little of the equity of that wrath of God, which is "revealed "from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs "of men." For if tranſgreſſion of human laws in any caſe juſtly merits the death of the body, which is the utmoſt puniſhment that man can inflict: tranſgreſſion of God's law, (conſidering who he is, and what are our obligations to him) may ſurely be allowed juſtly to merit the utmoſt effect of his power, who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell. Thus does the law, in the hand of the convincing Spirit of God, ſhow men their loſt eſtate, their guilt, danger, and miſery; and effectually demonſtrate to their conſciences, that their own righteouſneſs cannot juſtify, their own arm cannot ſave them. Further than this law cannot go; but muſt leave us under condemnation, and in deſpair, ſeparated from God, and neither allowed, able, nor willing in this world to approach unto his holy majeſty, with any acceptable ſervice; yet at laſt required to ſtand before his tribunal, in order to receive the recompence of our evil deeds. With this holy law, awful judgment, and eternal retributions before our eyes, who can deſpiſe the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? An almighty Saviour, a vicarious atonement and righteouſneſs, juſtification by faith alone, acceſs unto God upon a mercy ſeat with acceptance through a Mediator; the renewal of our ſouls to holineſs by the ſanctification of the Spirit; and eternal life, as *the free gift* of a gracious God to loſt ſinners, can only appear contemptible to him, who knows not the extent, ſpirituality or excellency of the law of God; or hath never carefully compared his heart and life with it having the day of judgment placed before his eyes. In the perſon, undertaking, obedience, and death of Chriſt, this law was magnified and made honourable, and the juſtice of God was ſatisfied: ſo that his hatred of ſin now harmonizes with his love to ſinners. Here is "the knowledge "of ſalvation to his people by the remiſſion of their ſins;" "for Chriſt hath redeemed them from the curſe of the law, "being made a curſe for them." View the character of Chriſt; in human nature, in the midſt of temptations and ſufferings, and even unto the death upon the croſs, he was perfectly obedient to this law in its fulleſt extent: on this obedience his divine nature ſtamped infinite value. This, O ſelf-condemned ſinner, is the proviſion God hath made for thy juſtification! this righteouſneſs, being commenſurate with the largeſt demands of the divine law, and being the righteouſneſs of God himſelf, "is upon all, and "unto all, them that believe; for there is no difference;" (*Rom.* iii. 22. 2 *Cor.* v. 21); and through the atoning blood, and the interceſſion grounded on it, we have open acceſs to the throne of grace of a reconciled God, notwithſtanding our perſonal guilt and unworthineſs. But can it then be poſſible, if the law be ſo holy and excellent, and ſuch honour have been put upon it by the obedience and ſufferings of the incarnate Son of God, that any redeemed ſinner ſhould be allowed to diſobey it? it is abſurdity, impoſſibility, blaſphemy! The knowledge of the law ſhows our need of repentance; the knowledge of Chriſt crucified is introduced, attended, and followed with repentance itſelf. In every believer's heart ſin is dethroned and crucified, the law of God is written, and the image of God is renewed: Chriſt is made his ſanctification: the holy Spirit diſpoſes, inclines, and enables him

2 If thou buy an Hebrew ſervant, ſix years he ſhall ſerve: and in the ſeventh he ſhall go out free for nothing.

3 If he came in by himſelf, he ſhall go out by himſelf: if he were married, then his wife ſhall go out with him.

4 If his maſter have given him a wife, and ſhe have borne him ſons or daughters; the wife and her children ſhall be her maſter's, and he ſhall go out by himſelf.

5 And if the ſervant ſhall plainly ſay, I love my maſter, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free:

6 Then his maſter ſhall bring him unto the judges; he ſhall alſo bring him to the door, or unto the door-poſt: and his maſter ſhall bore his ear through with an awl; and he ſhall ſerve him for ever.

7 And if a man ſell his daughter to be a maid-

him to hate and flee from ſin; to love, delight in, and keep this law in ſincerity and truth; and to copy daily his example who perfectly fulfilled it. Nor will the believer ever to ceaſe from the exerciſe of repentance, the purſuit of holineſs, or the earneſt application to Chriſt for increaſing ſanctification, till he become holy in heaven, as he who hath called him is holy. By theſe rules we may judge of our religion. May Chriſt be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to each of us; may the ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience prove the reality of our juſtification; may we make the law of God the rule, and the example of Chriſt the pattern of, our daily walk; and may his ſtatutes be the delight and counſellors of all who read theſe obſervations. Then ſhall we daily more and more rejoice in, and glorify God, adorn the Goſpel, ſerve our generation, and ripen for the world of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *Judgments.*] This word here means *judicial laws*, or rules of judgment, by which the magiſtrates and judges ſhould proceed in determining cauſes, and trying criminals.—Making proper allowances for the different circumſtances of the times, there is a ſpirit of equity in theſe laws, which is well worthy to be tranſfuſed into the laws of any ſtate.

V. 2. *An Hebrew ſervant*, &c.] The Iſraelites ſometimes ſold themſelves, or their children, through poverty; magiſtrates ſold ſome perſons for their crimes; and creditors were in certain caſes allowed to ſell their inſolvent debtors.—In theſe ways ſlavery was, or would be ſoon, introduced among them; even the ſlavery of their brethren, as well as that of ſtrangers: and God was pleaſed, in *the judicial law* not totally to prohibit this, and ſeveral other things, which do not accord to the law of love; but ſo to regulate them, as in great meaſure to prevent the bad conſequences of them.—The moral law is the ſtandard, by which every action is to be tried, whether it be right or wrong in itſelf: but in the government of nations, legiſlators muſt judge how far it is practicable, expedient, or tending to the grand ends of magiſtracy, to require *all* that is right, and forbid *all* that is wrong, under penal ſanctions. The nation of Iſrael, like other nations, was governed by, a *judicial law*, as to their outward conduct, for the well-being of ſociety; the violations of which were cognizable, and puniſhable by the civil magiſtrate with temporal puniſhments. This could not be the ſame law, with that, which eſpecially regarded the internal diſpoſitions of the heart, for the glory of God, known and puniſhable only by him, in a future ſtate, with eternal puniſhments.—As the lawgiver was the ſame, they would coincide, as far as his infinite wiſdom ſaw it proper, expedient, and conducive to the grand ends he had in view: but as they were intended for ſuch diſtinct purpoſes, they muſt in many things vary. The moral law commanded every thing ſpiritually good in its utmoſt perfection, and tolerated nothing wrong in the ſmalleſt degree: but the ſentence of it is reſerved "to that day, when God ſhall "judge the SECRETS of men by Jeſus Chriſt." The judicial law commanded nothing morally bad, forbad nothing morally good; but as ſentence according to it would be pronounced by the civil magiſtrate, it required not the ſame perfection: and, beſides that it enjoined nothing concerning the ſtate of the heart, it had reſpect unto the ſituation, character, and peculiar circumſtances of the nation to be governed; and ſuppoſed the exiſtence of ſome evils which could not be eradicated without a conſtant miracle; and provided againſt their effects."—This diſtinction, carefully attended to, will account for many things being *ſeemingly tolerated* in the Moſaic law, which are condemned in the New Teſtament; and not only there, but in the Ten Commandments, or moral law of "loving our neighbour "as ourſelves."—They are not ſanctioned, but *merely ſuffered* becauſe of the hardneſs of the people's hearts: or on ſome account to prevent worſe conſequences.—Slavery was almoſt univerſal in the world: and though, like wars, it always proceeded of evil, and was generally evil in itſelf; yet the wiſdom of God deemed it better to regulate, than to prohibit it: but we ſhould not judge of the practice itſelf by theſe *judicial regulations* but *by the law of love.* Slavery, like war, may in ſome caſes in the preſent ſtate of things, be lawful, even according to that perfect rule: for the crime which forfeits life, ſeems to forfeit liberty; and it does not appear inconſiſtent with even the moral law of God, for a criminal to be ſold and treated as a ſlave, during a term of time proportioned to his offence.—In moſt if not in all other caſes, it muſt be inconſiſtent with the law of love: and it *may be* inexpedient ever to inflict that puniſhment, becauſe it forms ſo undeſirable a precedent.

V. 4. *If his maſter*, &c.] Sometimes the perſons were married before they were reduced to ſlavery, and their wives, either by conſtraint or choice, attended them. But at other times their maſters gave them wives of their Hea- then ſlaves, (for it does not ſeem, that they could thus diſpoſe of a Hebrew female), and the iſſue of ſuch marriage as well as the wife, continued the maſter's property when the ſervant was diſcharged.

V. 7—11.] A Parent, induced by poverty, might ſome- time

maid-ſervant, ſhe ſhall not go out as the men-ſervants do.

8 If ſhe pleaſe not her maſter, who hath betrothed her to himſelf, then ſhall he let her be redeemed: To ſell her unto a ſtrange nation he ſhall have no power, ſeeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.

9 And if he have betrothed her unto his ſon, he ſhall deal with her after the manner of daughters.

10 If he take him another *wife*; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage ſhall he not diminiſh.

11 And if he do not theſe three unto her, then ſhall ſhe go out free without money.

12 He that ſmiteth a man, ſo that he die, ſhall be ſurely put to death.

13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he ſhall flee.

14 But if a man come preſumptuouſly upon his neighbour to ſlay him with guile; thou ſhalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

15 And he that ſmiteth his father or his mother, ſhall be ſurely put to death.

16 And he that ſtealeth a man, and ſelleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he ſhall ſurely be put to death.

17 And he that curſeth his father, or his mother, ſhall ſurely be put to death.

18 And if men ſtrive together, and one ſmite another with a ſtone, or with *his* fiſt, and he die not, but keep *his* bed:

19 If he riſe again, and walk abroad upon his ſtaff, then ſhall he that ſmote *him* be quit: only he ſhall pay *for* the loſs of his time, and ſhall cauſe *him* to be thoroughly healed.

20 And if a man ſmite his ſervant, or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand; he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed.

21 Notwithſtanding, if he continue a day or two, he ſhall not be puniſhed: for he *is* his money.

22 If men ſtrive and hurt a woman with child, ſo that her fruit depart *from her*, and yet no miſchief follow: he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed, according as the woman's huſband will lay upon him; and he ſhall pay as the judges *determine*.

23 And if *any* miſchief follow, then thou ſhalt give life for life.

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times thus ſell his child in her youth, with engagement, or expectation, that ſhe ſhould become the concubine, or wife, of the perſon who bought her.—Therefore, if the perſon who bought her, afterwards changed his mind, and did not marry her, the parents or other friends were allowed the liberty of redeeming her at a reaſonable price; but if they did not do it, ſhe was by no means to be ſold as a ſlave, or even to become the concubine of any Heathen, where ſhe would be out of the way of recovering her liberty, and likely to forget her religion: but the perſon who bought her muſt either keep her himſelf, or diſpoſe of her amongſt the Iſraelites, that ſhe might enjoy the benefit of their religion and laws: for having already deceived her, he muſt not add one injury to another.—But if, after he had married her, he took another wife, and neglected her, ſhe was to go out free, as a recompence for the injury which ſhe had received.

V. 12—14. If a man ſmote another wilfully, whether out of previous reſentment, or ſudden anger, and the blow itſelf was given with the intention of doing hurt, it was deemed murder: But when it was merely by accident, as we term it, but which is here called "God's delivering "him into his hand," as by his providence he thus is pleaſed to take away the life he gave, the cities of refuge were appointed for him to flee to. Yet ſo far were they from being a ſecurity to the wilful, preſumptuous, deliberate murderer, that he was to be torn from the altar of God itſelf, and put to death.—The Heathen altars and temples were generally refuges for criminals: but God would not have his altar profaned by protecting thoſe who deſerved puniſhment; nor did he appoint any ſacrifice for murder.

V. 15. *Smiteth his father*, &c.] The offences of ſmiting (though no fatal conſequences followed), or curſing, and venting imprecations againſt, parents, conſtituted ſuch daring rebellion againſt the authority of God veſted in them, and were ſo ungrateful and unnatural in themſelves, that no provocation was to be pleaded in excuſe; but they who committed them were puniſhed with death. (17)

V. 20, 21.] The murder of a ſlave with a ſword or other ſuch fatal weapon was, it ſeems, always puniſhable with death: but when after correction he happened to die, the maſter was not to be thus puniſhed, except this conſequence immediately followed; becauſe it might be preſumed that he had no intention of killing him, and was already a ſufferer in the loſs of his property.

V. 22. *No miſchief follow*, &c.] In caſe a woman with child interpoſed in behalf of her huſband aſſaulted by another perſon, and was hurt by him ſo as to miſcarry; but no further miſchief enſued either to her, or her huſband; ſatisfaction was to be made to the latter.

V. 23—25.] Theſe were not allowances to private revenge; but laws to regulate the judge's determination in the adminiſtration of juſtice, who might proceed thus far, but no farther.

24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, ſtripe for ſtripe.

26 And if a man ſmite the eye of his ſervant, or the eye of his maid, that it periſh; he ſhall let him go free for his eye's ſake.

27 And if he ſmite out his man-ſervant's tooth, or his maid-ſervant's tooth; he ſhall let him go free for his tooth's ſake.

28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox ſhall be ſurely ſtoned, and his fleſh ſhall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *ſhall be* quit.

29 But if the ox were wont to puſh with his horn in time paſt, and it hath been teſtified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox ſhall be ſtoned, and his owner alſo ſhall be put to death.

30 If there be laid on him a ſum of money, then he ſhall give for the ranſom of his life, whatſoever is laid upon him.

31 Whether he have gored a ſon or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment ſhall it be done unto him.

32 If the ox ſhall puſh a man-ſervant, or maid-ſervant; he ſhall give unto their maſter thirty ſhekels of ſilver, and the ox ſhall be ſtoned.

33 And if a man ſhall open a pit, or if a man ſhall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an aſs fall therein;

34 The owner of the pit ſhall make *it* good, *and* give money unto the owner of them; and the dead *beaſt* ſhall be his.

35 And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die, then they ſhall ſell the live ox, and divide the money of it, and the dead *ox* alſo they ſhall divide.

36 Or if it be known that the ox hath uſed to puſh in time paſt, and his owner hath not kept him in: he ſhall ſurely pay ox for ox, and the dead ſhall be his own.

CHAP.

V 30. *If there be*, &c.] The owner, who neglected to take care of a miſchievous ox, was anſwerable for the conſequences; and might be puniſhed by the magiſtrates as a murderer: but in caſe of alleviating circumſtances, they were empowered to change his ſentence into a fine, as a ranſom of his life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The commandments of God's law, as well as the diſpenſations of his providence, not only relate to the grand outlines of his adminiſtration, but deſcend to the minuteſt matters, and the meaneſt objects; eſpecially when righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth, are concerned. With a condeſcending regard he particularly watches over thoſe who are moſt expoſed to oppreſſion, injuſtice, or damage; and has reſpect to all ranks, from the pooreſt beggar to the mightieſt monarch; and to all the ſtages of human exiſtence, from the newly-conceived embryo in the womb, to decrepit old age.—Though he no longer reigneth over any ſingle nation in that peculiar ſenſe, in which he reigned over Iſrael; yet is he King over all the earth, and will at his awful tribunal arraign and condemn thoſe violations of his law, which here eſcape notice, or elude the ſword of human juſtice.—Having his precepts and example before our eyes, and this judgment in our remembrance; with what equity, ſincerity, and humanity, ſhould we treat our ſervants, dependents, and inferiors! We ought ſo to behave towards our domeſtics, that, though free from other bonds, they may be attached to us by the ties of love, and count it their privilege to ſpend and cloſe their days in our ſervice.—We ſhould be cautious not to act deceitfully in the important concern of marriage: but ſtill more ought we to abhor the baſeneſs of conſigning to laſting diſgrace and miſery, for the ſake of a worthleſs gratification, an unhappy object, over whom we have by any means acquired an aſcendency: on the contrary, we ſhould learn habitually to ſacrifice perſonal advantage or indulgence to general benevolence.—If this were our diſpoſition, there would not need laws to reſtrain us from ſuch unnatural crimes as ſtealing our brethren, and ſo many methods to inſpire us with horror of the ſin of murder: for, ſo far from lying in wait to ſhed blood, or trading in the bodies of men, we ſhould watch for, and gladly embrace, the opportunity of preſerving the liberty or life of our enemy; ſtill repreſſing the riſing emotions of anger, pouring out our prayers, and attempting acts of kindneſs under the greateſt provocations: and inſtead of enforcing the law of retaliation, we ſhould ever be ambitious of overcoming evil with good.—Then ſhould we guard, though with trouble and loſs, againſt whatever could endanger the life or property of another: and whilſt we were ever ready in any way to make up any damage, which we had indiſcreetly, or even without our blame, occaſioned to others, to the utmoſt of our power, we ſhould be very backward in demanding ſuch ſatisfaction to ourſelves. But let children hear with trembling, the ſentence of God's word upon the ungrateful and diſobedient; and remember that God will certainly require it, if they have

CHAP. XXII.

Contains Laws; 1st. Concerning theft and fraud, kindling fires which occasion damage, breach of trust, things borrowed, or hired, &c. v. 1—15. *2d. Concerning seducers, v.* 16, 17. *3d. Concerning the punishment of witchcraft, beastiality, and idolatry, v.* 18—20. *4th, Concerning the treatment of strangers, widows, and orphans, v.* 21—24. *5th. Against usury, v.* 25—27. *6th. Against reviling rulers; concerning the first-fruits and firstlings, and against eating the flesh of torn animals, v.* 28—31.

IF a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, *there shall* no blood *be shed* for him.

3 If the sun be risen upon him, *there shall be* blood *shed* for him: *for* he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field: of the best of his

have even cursed their parents in their hearts, or lifted up their hand against them; except they repent, and flee for refuge to the Saviour.—And let parents hence learn double care in training up their children; in inculcating all good instructions; in setting them a good example, especially in the government of their passions; and in praying for them: taking heed not to provoke them to wrath by unreasonable harshness and severity; lest they themselves should prove the occasions to their children of contracting such enormous guilt, and of suffering such heavy punishment.—And whilst we rejoice that the circumstances of the times *in this land* render these statutes about slavery, and its appendages, needless; let us take care that we sell not ourselves, or our children, to work wickedness out of love to unhallowed gain: and instead of being so attached to the service of sin and Satan, now that the Gospel proclaims full deliverance to all, who will break off their former sinful connections, and leave all for the sake of true liberty; let us, as the redeemed of the Lord, out of love to him and his service, have, as it were, our ear nailed to the posts of his door, that, hearkening to his voice, we may be his willing servants for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1. *If a man*, &c.] The property of the Israelites consisted principally in cattle, which were therefore particularly mentioned in these laws against theft. If the thief had proceeded so far to kill or sell what he had stolen, he was condemned to restore four-fold; and in case of oxen, which were useful also for their labour, five-fold: if they were found alive in his hand, he was required to return double: (4:) but if through remorse of conscience he restored what he had stolen, voluntarily, and previous to discovery, he was only directed to add a fifth part to it. (*Lev.* vi. 4, 5.) But in case he was not able to make the appointed restitution, he was sold for a slave; and probably the money was given to make up the loss of the injured party.—We should deem such laws inadequate to the security of property: but though circumstances are exceedingly altered since the times of Moses, human nature is the same; and we are not apt to consider the nation of Israel as better disposed than other people: yet God himself deemed these laws sufficient in their case. It is true, theft among us is very commonly connected with an avowed or apparent intention of murder, in case of resistance, which exceedingly enhances the crime: but it is worthy of consideration, whether equalling the punishment of theft to that of murder, by making both capital, do not contribute to confound the disparity of the crimes in the minds of unthinking men; as well as to remove that restraint from committing or threatening murder, which would arise from the dread of a severer punishment. However, where the intention of murder is out of the question, it seems not consistent with equity, or humanity, to punish theft as severely as that most atrocious of crimes: and it is evident from the increase of criminals, though such numbers are put to death, that it does not answer the intended purpose, but seems to meet with a frown in God's providence. This may be one reason of its ill success: humane persons are loth to take away the life of a fellow-creature for the loss of a small sum of money or other property, they do not therefore prosecute when they can help it; and in many other respects natural compassion opens a way for young criminals to escape; by which means they frequently remain unpunished till they have arrived at a great pitch of hardened wickedness, and have corrupted many others: and by the same means, whilst such numbers escape all punishment for so long a time, every one is encouraged to promise himself impunity. If, in case of lotteries, self-flattery induces every adventurer to hope for the capital prize, though so many chances are against him; much more will the thief flatter himself with the hopes of escaping, when so many chances appear for him: and it seems incontrovertible, that the *sure prospect* of a less punishment would operate more powerfully in preventing crimes, than the distant possibility of death; especially with men, whose headstrong passions, rushing upon present gratification, disregard all temporal *future* consequences in proportion to their distance, and are totally regardless of things eternal.

V. 2—4.] If any one attempted *in the night* to break into an house, it might be construed into an assault upon the lives as well as the property of the inhabitants, and be repelled with force; and if the assailant were slain, the person who slew him was not liable to punishment. But after

his own field, and of the beſt of his own vineyard, ſhall he make reſtitution.

6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, ſo that the ſtacks of corn, or the ſtanding-corn, or the field be conſumed *therewith*; he that kindled the fire ſhall ſurely make reſtitution.

7 If a man ſhall deliver unto his neighbour money or ſtuff to keep, and it be ſtolen out of the man's houſe; if the thief be found, let him pay double.

8 If the thief be not found, then the maſter of the houſe ſhall be brought unto the judges, *to ſee* whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods.

9 For all manner of treſpaſs, *whether it be* for ox, for aſs, for ſheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of loſt thing, which *another* challengeth to be his: the cauſe of both parties ſhall come before the judges; *and* whom the judges ſhall condemn, he ſhall pay double unto his neighbour.

10 If a man deliver unto his neighbour an aſs, or an ox, or a ſheep, or any beaſt to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man ſeeing *it*:

11 *Then* ſhall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods: and the owner of it ſhall accept *thereof*, and he ſhall not make *it* good.

12 And if it be ſtolen from him, he ſhall make reſtitution unto the owner thereof.

13 If it be torn in pieces *then* let him bring it *for* witneſs, *and* he ſhall not make good that which was torn.

14 And if a man borrow *ought* of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof *being* not with it; he ſhall ſurely make *it* good.

15 *But* if the owner thereof *be* with it, he ſhall make *it* good: if it *be* an hired *thing*, it came for his hire.

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her; he ſhall ſurely endow her to be his wife.

17 If her father utterly refuſe to give her unto him, he ſhall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

18 Thou ſhalt not ſuffer a witch to live.

19 Whoſoever

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after the ſun was riſen, he might not be killed in defence merely of property; becauſe there was another way of ſecuring or recovering it.

V. 9. *Whom the judges*, &c.] In all theſe caſes a diſcretionary power was lodged with the magiſtrate, to ſettle the diſpute according to equity.

V. 16. *If a man entice*, &c.] Nothing can be more equitable than ſome regulation of this kind, if properly reſtricted to the caſe of *real ſeduction* by an unmarried man. But even in the preſent ſtate of things, it is matter of fact, capable of demonſtration, that in theſe licentious days many young women in inferior circumſtances, and even encouraged by their parents, (ſhocking as it may ſeem) employ their utmoſt addreſs to attract the attention of young men of better circumſtances; in order that, under the pretence of ſeduction, they may be married to greater advantage! In attempting to remedy the grievous evil of real ſeduction, this ſhould by no means be encouraged and increaſed. But it ſeems highly reaſonable, that every unmarried man, whatever his circumſtances are, who debauches a virgin with promiſes of marriage, or any engagements which have the ſame effect upon her mind, ſhould be obliged actually to marry her; and that, if a married man, profeſſing himſelf unmarried, thus ſeduce a virgin, he ſhould be obliged to maintain her whilſt ſhe continues unmarried. But a young woman, who ſuffers herſelf to be enticed by a man whom ſhe knows to be married, ſeems not entitled to the ſame compenſation, whatever puniſhment *he* merits. It is not at all to our purpoſe to enquire whether, by this law, the ſeducer, though previouſly married, was to take her, whom he had ſeduced, to wife alſo. Polygamy was an *evil*, which then actually exiſted; and many regulations were made, which *ſuppoſed*, though they did not *ſanction*, its exiſtence: "But in the beginning it was not ſo;" nor is it under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, or according to our municipal laws.

V. 17. *If her father*, &c.] Though neither the ſeducer nor the perſon ſeduced was allowed a negative, the father of the latter might prevent the marriage: which ſhows what regard ſhould be paid by young perſons to the judgment and authority of their parents in this important concern. It ſeems a ſum of money was paid to the father, whether he conſented to the marriage or not. (*Deut* xxii. 28, 29.)

V. 18. *Thou ſhalt not*, &c.] Witchcraft is generally underſtood to mean, 'a combination or compact with evil 'ſpirits, by whoſe agency and aſſiſtance, applied for by 'certain incantations, effects of various kinds may be pro- 'duced, by which malice, or covetouſneſs, or other cor- 'rupt paſſion, may be gratified.' A vaſt variety of practices with different degrees of aggravation, which will in ſuc ceſſion hereafter come in our way, agree in common wi witchcraft, in avowedly making "Satan the god "the world," and the god of thoſe who thus apply to hi for information or aſſiſtance. It is readily allowed that muc impoſture on the one hand, (which forms a very ſingul kind of hypocriſy!) and much ſuperſtition, folly, a cruelty on the other hand, have taken place, in reſpe

19 Whoſoever lieth with a beaſt, ſhall ſurely be put to death.

20 He that ſacrificeth unto *any* god, ſave unto the LORD only, he ſhall be utterly deſtroyed.

21 Thou ſhalt neither vex a ſtranger, nor oppreſs him: for ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt.

22 Ye ſhall not afflict any widow, or fatherleſs child.

23 If thou afflict them in any wiſe, and they cry at all unto me: I will ſurely hear their cry;

24 And my wrath ſhall wax hot, and I will kill you with the ſword; and your wives ſhall be widows, and your children fatherleſs.

25 If thou lend money to *any of* my people *that is* poor by thee, thou ſhalt not be to him as an uſurer, neither ſhalt thou lay upon him uſury.

26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's rai-

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of pretenſions to, and accuſations of, theſe practices.—But it ſeems one of the moſt flagrant abſurdities of modern Sadduceiſm, to ſuppoſe that God himſelf would repeatedly command the magiſtrates of his people, to puniſh with death a crime which never was committed! The exiſtence, ſagacity, malice, ambition, and power of evil ſpirits are ſufficiently declared in Scripture: there can be no doubt, but they are both capable and willing thus to interpoſe, if permitted; and that human nature is capable of ſuch wickedneſs as *even* knowingly to combine with them, can ſcarcely be denied: that witchcraft may be, that it hath been, and that it ſtill is, in ſome parts of the world, actually practiſed, ſeems capable of proof, were any collateral evidence neceſſary to confirm the truth of the divine teſtimony. But as, by certain degrees of cultivation, wild beaſts are baniſhed, or extirpated, ſo in ſome ſtages of civilization the practice of witchcraft is nearly excluded. The truth is; in ſuch circumſtances it no longer ſo well anſwers Satan's grand purpoſe of deception and deſtruction: he therefore ſhifts his ground, and varies his attack; nor is he any loſer, by exchanging the practice of witchcraft for the prevalence of ſcepticiſm.

V. 20. *Shall*, &c.] Idolatry was before by the moral law forbidden to all men: but every idolatrous *Iſraelite* is here commanded to be puniſhed with immediate death. We find afterwards that whole cities, involved in that guilt, were ordered to be utterly deſtroyed. (*Deut.* xiii. 12—17.) For this was a breach of the national covenant. (*Deut.* xvii. 2.) But ſo long as their judges thus puniſhed it, it would not be accounted a national forfeiture of the charter.

V. 21. *Thou ſhalt*, &c.] The Iſraelites were required to encourage ſtrangers to live among them, and to recommend the true religion to them by kind uſage: not forgetting how hard they thought their own treatment in Egypt.

V. 25. *Thou ſhalt*, &c.] *Uſury* ſeems to conſiſt in taking increaſe from the poor, on what they borrow for preſent ſubſiſtence; which tends to enrich the lender, by ſtill more impoveriſhing the borrower. This was frequently carried to ſuch a pitch among the ancients, and even the Iſraelites, that the creditors conſtrained their debtors to ſell themſelves, or their children, for ſlaves, which was an evident violation of the law of love. (*Neh.* v. 2—5.) The Iſraelites were but little engaged in commerce; and the law was not only calculated, but *intended*, to prevent them from being ſo, and to keep them from mingling by any means with other nations: their land alſo was divided by lot, and they were not allowed to alienate their inheritances: they were not therefore much in the way of lending or taking up money upon intereſt, to employ in trade or expend in eſtates; in which caſes, and in thoſe of the like nature, it appears not inconſiſtent with either equity or love, for the lender to receive a proportion of the profits from the borrower. However, every thing of the kind was prohibited to the Iſraelites in their dealings with their brethren, though allowed in their tranſactions with ſtrangers, whom yet they were forbidden to *oppreſs*. (*Deut.* xxiii. 19, 20.) So that, though for ſpecial reaſons the Lord would not allow Iſraelites to take intereſt of their brethren in any caſe yet the *expreſs* allowance to take it of ſtrangers, ſhews that it is not ſinful in all caſes of itſelf, but only ſo far as it violates the law of love, and is attended by oppreſſion.

V. 26, 27, &c.] How far the buſineſs of a pawnbroker, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, conſiſts with the ſpirit of theſe precepts, is a queſtion which involves much difficulty. Some are of opinion, and ſeem to argue with conſiderable plauſibility, that the very buſineſs is *radically* injurious to ſociety, and inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity: and certainly, as it is frequently conducted, its tendency is ſo. But as all *receiving increaſe* is not abſolutely prohibited, it may be doubted whether the *full* concluſion can *in all caſes* be drawn from the premiſes. It is not however an employment, to which a real Chriſtian can be ſuppoſed ſo partial, as to chooſe it either for himſelf or his children, after he hath become acquainted with the truth, power, and ſpirit of the Goſpel. But ſhould the grace of God meet with a perſon already engaged in this buſineſs, as having been educated to it, or accuſtomed to get his livelihood by it; and ſhould he be formed indeed to uprightneſs, benevolence, and conſcientiouſneſs; it may be queſtioned whether, by rendering his employment leſs lucrative to himſelf, he might not render it beneficial, or at leaſt not oppreſſive, to others; ſo that he might in that buſineſs have the prayers of the poor for him, not their cries againſt him. In this caſe the employment may be lawful; but it may be doubted whether in any other. If ſuch a perſon ſhould, after ſerious examination and fervent prayers to God for direction, find himſelf at liberty to continue in his calling, he will endeavour to "abide therein with God;" he will conſider it as his croſs, and take it up as ſuch; and diſdaining the proſpect of heaping up wealth, by every profit which

ment to pledge, thou ſhalt deliver it unto him by that the ſun goeth down:

27 For that *is* his covering only, it *is* his raiment for his ſkin: wherein ſhall he ſleep? And it ſhall come to paſs, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I *am* gracious.

28 Thou ſhalt not revile the gods, nor curſe the ruler of thy people.

29 Thou ſhalt not delay *to offer* the firſt of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the firſt-born of thy ſons ſhalt thou give unto me.

30 Likewiſe ſhalt thou do with thine oxen, *and* with thy ſheep: ſeven days it ſhall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou ſhalt give it me.

31 And ye ſhall be holy men unto me: neither ſhall ye eat *any* fleſh *that is* torn of beaſts in the field: ye ſhall caſt it to the dogs.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1ſt. Laws forbidding ſlander, wreſting of judgment, bribery, and oppreſſion; and requiring kindneſs to enemies, v. 1—9. 2d. The law of the ſabbatical year, and of the weekly ſabbath, with a caution againſt idolatry, v. 10—13. 3d. The appointment of the three great annual feaſts, v. 14—19. 4th. Promiſes of conducting Iſrael ſafe to Canaan, putting them in poſſeſſion, enlarging their borders, and deſtroying their enemies; accompanied with cautions and precepts, v. 20—33.

THOU ſhalt not raiſe a falſe report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witneſs.

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the laws of the land may connive at, he will carefully conſult the law of God, of equity, of humanity, and of love; and will only go ſo far in his employment, as he verily deemed conſiſtent with theſe rules. And if a man's heart be upright, the Lord will either ſatisfy him to proceed, or encourage him to caſt himſelf upon his providence in renouncing it.

V. 28. *The gods*, &c.] This is generally underſtood to mean the magiſtrates or rulers of God's people; who repreſented his authority amongſt them, and were entitled to honour on that account, though perhaps not perſonally. (*Acts*, xxiii. 5.) Theſe commandments from the twentieth verſe, having no puniſhment to be inflicted by the judge annexed to them, are rather to be conſidered as moral precepts, binding upon the conſcience in the ſight of God, than judicial laws. What follows is ceremonial, and will hereafter be ſpoken upon to more advantage.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

According to the ſpirit of theſe laws, the people of God ſhould ever be inclined to mildneſs and mercy; be tender of the lives and ſouls even of thieves and robbers; and not value their own property ſo highly, as to put it in competition with them. They ought never to be willingly acceſſary to the death of another, except in the defence of their own lives, or in the execution of public juſtice: they then ſhould go about it as a painful duty; with reluctancy, and ſorrow of heart; not urged on by reſentment or ſelf-intereſt, but by conſcience, to ſacrifice the life of an individual to the public good. We ſhould ever keep in mind, that we are anſwerable in the ſight of God, not only for the conſequences of what we do maliciouſly, but of what we do heedleſsly; and are chargeable with injuſtice, not only if we do thoſe things which expoſe us to the laſh of the law; but for various acts of ſelfiſhneſs, abuſe of confidence, ſecret—double dealing, and even careleſsneſs of things borrowed. And therefore, if we are conſcious of having thus injured our neighbour, and are truly penitent, we ſhall endeavour to make reſtitution to the utmoſt of our ability, though not compelled to it by the ſentence of the magiſtrate. The fear of God ruling within us, the law of God written in our hearts, an humble recollection of what we were in our loſt eſtate, and a thankful ſenſe of what the Lord hath done for us, will produce tenderneſs of conſcience; carefulneſs to avoid all appearance of evil, and all occaſions of injury; humanity to the fatherleſs and widow; kindneſs to the ſtranger, and to all the ſons and daughters of penury; the ſubjection of our appetites and paſſions to the will of God; a regard to the credit of our religion; and a diſpoſition "to honour the Lord "with our ſubſtance and with the firſt-fruits of all our "increaſe;" and to devote ourſelves to be an holy people unto the Lord. What a contraſt do ſuch characters form to thoſe, whoſe ſelfiſh and filthy hearts are capable of crimes more than brutal, and truly diabolical! who need to be held in with ſuch laws, and puniſhments as theſe, and all too little! who have the cries of the oppreſſed, the widow, the orphan, and the poor, and the wrath of God againſt them: and who muſt be cut off by the avenging ſword of human juſtice, to prevent further miſchief. This is human nature unchanged and unreſtrained: the other is true grace converting, and ruling in, the heart. "Turn thou us, O Lord, and ſo ſhall we be turned," that we may be "unto thee a peculiar people zealous of "good works," through Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1. *Raiſe*, &c.] The margin reads it *receive* a falſe report; for he that willingly receives and propagates a ſlander, ſhares the guilt with him that raiſed it: and that is ſtill more heinous, when a falſe report is atteſted in a court of juſtice.

V. 2. *Thou ſhalt not*, &c.] This is a general rule of conduct, which allows of no exceptions: But here it is introduced with eſpecial reference to bearing falſe witneſs; being

2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many to wrest *judgment*.

3 Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

4 If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him: thou shalt surely help with him.

6 Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.

7 Keep thee far from a false matter: and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

8 And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof.

11 But the seventh *year* thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, *and* with thy oliveyard.

12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed.

13 And in all *things* that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

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being influenced in giving evidence by common report or popular clamour. As Mr. *Brown* expresses it: 'Neither 'parties, friends, judges, witnesses, or vulgar opinions, 'must move us, to lessen great faults, aggravate small 'ones, vindicate offenders, accuse the innocent, or misre-'present any thing, to procure an unjust sentence.'

V. 7, 8.] These verses are especially addressed to the judges, by way of caution and warning to them. For if they knowingly, or incautiously, admitted the evidence of a false witness, and in consequence of it, or from any corrupt motive, gave *false* sentence, in a case of life and death; they would be considered in God's sight, as murderers of the righteous and innocent; and by parity of reason, in causes relating to property, of robbery or oppression; and if they were so wicked, as to condemn the innocent, God would never *justify them*, when they stood before his righteous judgment seat; for such conduct would prove them to be *wicked*, that is impenitent and unbelieving, and they must therefore continue under the wrath of God as long as they persisted in it. They must not therefore take any bribe, or any present from the persons whose cause they were to decide, though without an express condition annexed: for that would be a temptation, which would tend to warp the judgment, and pervert the sentence even of such as were otherwise wise and righteous.—It is recorded of Sir *Matthew Hale*, that upon his circuit as a judge, he refused to try the cause of a gentleman, who had sent him the *customary present* of venison, until he had paid him for it. It seems he well understood the *spirit* of these laws, which is by no means antiquated.

V. 11. *But the seventh year*, &c.] This law seems to have been intended to remind the Israelites that they were the Lord's tenants for their estates, and they must observe his rules in cultivating them, as well as in disposing of the product of them; otherwise they would incur a forfeiture of the lease: to teach them dependence on his providence, and observation of his faithfulness in sending them the larger increase, whilst they kept his appointments: to inculcate indifference about corruptible riches; and a spirit of liberality to the poor, who were to appropriate the spontaneous productions of the land, during this year. It would be a real advantage to the land to lie thus fallow from time to time: it was also typical of the heavenly rest, when all earthly labours, cares, and interests shall cease for ever: some have moreover supposed, that the seven-thousandth year of the world will have somewhat analogous to this sabbatical year.

V. 13. *Make no mention*, &c.] The Lord's people were forbidden to mention the names of idols, lest the familiar use of them should abate their abhorrence, and make way to the worship of them. It is worth while to enquire how far the familiar acquaintance with the heathen mythology, which accompanies a classical education, consists with this law; and whether it does not subserve the cause of scepticism and immorality, and prove of unfavourable consequence to genuine Christianity. The characters and anecdotes of *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, *Mars*, *Venus*, and other abominable idols, agreeably told in the fictions of the poets, lose their horror, and fill the youthful mind with delight and admiration: and an imagination furnished with abundance of such ideas, and a judgment perverted by such examples, promise nothing very desirable, either in respect of the chastity, sobriety, humility, faith, or piety of those who are thus educated. It were to be wished that such books as *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, and many others, were either totally kept out of the hands of *inexperienced* youth, or more cautiously entrusted in them. As to the chief places of public diversion, they subsist by accommodation to the more plausible

passions

14 Three times ſhalt thou keep a feaſt unto me in the year.

15 Thou ſhalt keep the feaſt of unleavened bread: thou ſhalt eat unleavened bread ſeven days, as I commanded thee in the time appointed of the month Abib: for in it thou cameſt out from Egypt: and none ſhall appear before me empty:

16 And the feaſt of harveſt, the firſt-fruits of thy labours, which thou haſt ſown in the field: and the feaſt of in-gathering *which is* in the end of the year, when thou haſt gathered in thy labours out of the field.

17 Three times in the year all thy males ſhall appear before the LORD GOD.

18 Thou ſhalt not offer the blood of my ſacrifice with leavened bread, neither ſhall the fat of my ſacrifice remain until the morning.

19 The firſt of the firſt-fruits of thy land thou ſhalt bring into the houſe of the LORD thy God. Thou ſhalt not ſeethe a kid in his mother's milk.

20 Behold, I ſend an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

21 Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your tranſgreſſions: for my name *is* in him.

22 But if thou ſhalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I ſpeak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adverſary unto thine adverſaries.

23 For mine Angel ſhall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, *and* the Hivites, and the Jebuſites: and I will cut them off.

24 Thou ſhalt not bow down to their gods, nor ſerve them, nor do after their works: but thou ſhalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

25 And ye ſhall ſerve the LORD your God, and he ſhall bleſs thy bread, and thy water: and I will take ſickneſs away from the midſt of thee.

26 There ſhall nothing caſt their young nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.

27 I will ſend my fear before thee, and will deſtroy all the people to whom thou ſhalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

28 And I will ſend hornets before thee, which ſhall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee.

29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; leſt the land become deſolate, and the beaſt of the field multiply againſt thee.

30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increaſed, and inherit the land.

31 And I will ſet thy bounds from the Red ſea even unto the ſea of the Philiſtines, and from the deſert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou ſhalt drive them out before thee.

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paſſions of depraved human nature; and the *Heatheniſm* of them only forms an additional proof of their unfavourable aſpect on Chriſtianity; and an additional reaſon, why real Chriſtians ſhould keep themſelves and their children from them.

V. 14—17.] We ſhall hereafter meet with a more particular account of theſe feaſts, under the names of the Feaſt of Paſſover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles, when once for all ſome obſervations will be made on them. (*Notes*, &c. *Lev.* xxiii. *Deut.* xvi.)

V. 19. *Thou ſhalt not ſeethe*, &c.] This ſingular practice, which is more than once prohibited, might be deemed to have ſome ſemblance of cruelty in it; or might be conſidered as an unnatural gratification of the appetite: but probably it was a ſuperſtition, or a ſort of incantation in uſe amongſt the idolaters, by which they thought to ſecure a plentiful harveſt.

V. 21. *My name is in him.*] When we recollect the many ſcriptures, which call an Angel, that appeared to the people of God, by the names, *Jehovah*, and *Elohim* that is *God*, we cannot miſtake the meaning of this expreſſion, or be in doubt, who this Angel was, who had power on earth to forgive, or not to forgive, ſins, and in whom was the name of *Jehovah*; which ſeems naturally to mean the participation of the divine perfections, as well as acting with divine authority; being one with the Father, the brightneſs or effulgency of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. (*Heb.* i. 3.)

V. 28. *Hornets*, &c.] This promiſe was doubtleſs literally accompliſhed, after the manner of the plagues of Egypt, in ſome one, or in many, of their engagements with the Canaanites; though it be not any where recorded.

V. 31. *River.*] The river Euphrates, to which the territories of Iſrael extended in the days of David and Solomon; and were contracted afterwards only in puniſhment of their ſins.

32 Thou ſhalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

33 They ſhall not dwell in thy land, leſt they make thee ſin againſt me: for if thou ſerve their gods, it will ſurely be a ſnare unto thee.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes delivering God's meſſage to Iſrael, and their conſent to enter into covenant with God according to it, v. 1—3. 2d. The covenant ſolemnly ratified with ſacrifices and the ſprinkling of blood, v. 4—8. 3d. Moſes, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the ſeventy elders of Iſrael going up to the mount, favoured with a viſion of God, and feaſting together before him, v. 9—11. 4th. Moſes, at God's command, attended part of the way by Joſhua, aſcending into the mount, and continuing there forty days and forty nights, v. 12—18.

AND he ſaid unto Moſes, Come up unto the LORD, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and ſeventy of the elders of Iſrael: and worſhip ye afar off.

2 And

V. 33. *A ſnare unto thee*, &c.] As this conduct would involve the people in guilt, it would alſo aſſuredly entangle them in inextricable perplexities and complicated ſufferings. All the latter part of this chapter primarily relates to the national covenant, the ſolemn ratification of which is recorded in the next chapter; and only by way of accommodation to true believers, and to ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How manifold are the occaſions of, and temptations to, ſin in this evil world! He, who would keep a conſcience void of offence towards God and man, muſt not only watch againſt and ſubjugate his own covetouſneſs, pride, reſentment, envy, and ſenſuality, and reſiſt ſuch temptations as are directly addreſſed to them: but he muſt take heed that his judgment be not biaſſed, and his heart prejudiced, by the authority, example, or reaſonings of men, who are held in reputation for their wiſdom, learning, and virtue; by the influence of the rich and great; by gratitude to benefactors; by natural affection to relations; or by partiality to beloved friends; by fear of offending thoſe on whom he hath dependence, or from whom he hath expectations; by reverence to ſuperiors; by popular clamours; by a party ſpirit; by vulgar reports; by conformity to the maxims, cuſtoms, and faſhions of the world; or even by good nature, and compaſſion for the poor and afflicted. For there is no paſſion, or propenſity in the human heart, however amiable in its general exerciſe, which will not betray us into imprudence, injuſtice, and even impiety, unleſs it be regulated by divine Grace, and ſubordinated to the fear and love of God. Under the Moſaic diſpenſation the divine law not only required the ſame equity and truth, the ſame tenderneſs of men's reputation and comfort, as well as the ſame regard to their liberty and property; but even the ſame love to enemies, which are inculcated by the precepts of the Goſpel; and the ſame diſpoſition, however injured or exaſperated, to mortify malevolence, and to return good for evil: though the blind guides of the Jewiſh church were incapable of diſcerning it. This integrity, impartiality, and benevolence, united with a noble diſintereſtedneſs, great firmneſs and boldneſs, an habitual fear of God, and expectation of the great day of retribution, are peculiarly requiſite in all perſons who are concerned in the public adminiſtration of juſtice; as legiſlators, judges, magiſtrates, lawyers, juries, witneſſes, or proſecutors. For when human wiſdom has done its utmoſt, ſuch perſons will have manifold opportunities, and various ſtrong temptations to wreſt or miſlead judgment, to the great injury and oppreſſion of numbers, and even to the murder of the innocent and righteous. Such legal murders have in many ages and nations been extremely frequent: with conſiderable confidence and gratitude we may however aſſert, that they are well guarded againſt in this favoured nation: how deſirable is it that we could without heſitation add, '*and in all its diſtant* '*provinces?*' But wherever they are committed, they are the moſt malignant of all murders, and will be found ſo, at the day "when the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, "and no more cover her ſlain."—Even true Chriſtians have need not only to pray "lead us not into temptation," but to keep at a diſtance from all occaſions of it. For there is a magnetic ſympathy betwixt the evil which remains in our hearts, and that evil which is in the world; and when they come near together, they forcibly attract each other, until they come into contact: then the eyes of the wiſeſt are blinded; and the words and works of the righteous perverted. We ought therefore to be circumſpect in every thing; for without much diligence and attention we cannot ourſelves be ſaved, nor can we glorify God, and do good: but mere heedleſſneſs will ruin our ſouls, diſhonour God, and do miſchief. We ſhould then beware of covetouſneſs, ſtudy and pray for contentment with food and raiment, and learn to expect and ſeek our daily bread from God, in the way which he directs, and to truſt him for the morrow. Then ſhould we cheerfully render to God and to man their dues; devote with pleaſure to his ſervice that portion of our time which he requires; count his ſabbaths and ordinances feaſts to our ſouls; and willingly impart a proportion of our little to the relief of others ſtill poorer than ourſelves, though we had nothing to depend upon in future but his providence and promiſe. Thus, under the guidance and banner of the great Angel of the covenant, in whom is the name of Jehovah; obeying his voice, ſubmitting to his will, fearing nothing but his indignation and failing of his forgiveneſs, deſiring the comforts of his Spirit, depending on his arm, and expecting the fulfilment of his promiſes; we ſhall march forward towards the heavenly Canaan, through hoſts of oppoſing foes, whilſt he daily makes us more than conquerors. And though it is not his will to deſtroy our inward enemies all at once, but

2 And Moſes alone ſhall come near the LORD: but they ſhall not come nigh, neither ſhall the people go up with him.

3 And Moſes came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people anſwered with one voice, and ſaid, All the words which the LORD hath ſaid, we will do.

4 And Moſes wrote all the words of the LORD, and roſe up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

5 And he ſent young men of the children of Iſrael, which offered burnt-offerings, and ſacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6 And Moſes took half of the blood, and put *it* in baſons; and half of the blood he ſprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they ſaid, All that the LORD hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moſes took the blood, and ſprinkled *it* on the people: and ſaid, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all theſe words.

9 Then went up Moſes and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and ſeventy of the elders of Iſrael.

10 And they ſaw the God of Iſrael: and *there was* under his feet, as it were a paved work

by little and little, yet they ſhall finally be extirpated; and he will take occaſion, from their exiſtence and oppoſition, to diſplay his own glory, and to promote our good: ſo that the whole ſhall iſſue in deeper humility, in more admiring love, and ardent gratitude for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *He ſaid*, &c.] Moſes had been receiving laws from God ever ſince "he drew near to the thick darkneſs, where God was;" (xx. 21;) though probably he had not aſcended to the ſummit of the mountain "into the midſt of the cloud," as we read he did at the cloſe of this chapter. But he was now ſent down to the people, with thoſe laws which he had already received, to ratify the covenant before ſpoken of.—The perſons here named were ordered to come up unto the Lord, that is, nearer than the people; yet they were not permitted to aſcend to the top of the mount as Moſes did, but to worſhip reverently at a diſtance.

V. 3. *All the words—and all the judgments*, &c.] That is, all thoſe judicial laws, moral precepts, cautions, and promiſes, which Moſes had received.

V. 4. *Moſes wrote*, &c.] The people having a ſecond time, after hearing the law, conſented to enter into covenant and be obedient, Moſes wrote, as it is probable, the four foregoing chapters in a book, as the terms and tenor of the *national* covenant, which was now to be ſolemnly ratified: for ſuch it muſt be; ſeeing that the covenant of works has nothing to do with altars, ſacrifices, and the ſprinkling of blood; and the covenant of Grace is not made with whole nations, or collective bodies of people of divers characters; but only repreſentatively with Chriſt as the Surety of the Elect, and perſonally with true believers. But whilſt this covenant was made with the nation of Iſrael in reſpect to their outward bleſſings, it was a "ſhadow of good things to come;" (*Heb.* x. 1;) and had many things in it, which accord to the ſituation of thoſe, who live under an outward diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and have God's ordinances and oracles among them.—The altar ſeems to have been intended to denote God's preſence as a party in this covenant, and the twelve pillars the twelve tribes of Iſrael as the other party; perhaps not without reference to the hardneſs of their ſtony hearts. Betwixt theſe two covenanting parties Moſes acted as a typical mediator.

V. 5. *Young men*, &c.] It does not appear whether theſe were the ſame perſons, who were before called prieſts, or not. (xix. 22.) But in this tranſaction they acted only as aſſiſtants to Moſes, who officiated as prieſt in this and ſeveral other inſtances.

V. 6—8. The blood was ſprinkled on the altar, on the book, and on the people; (ſome conjecture that it was ſprinkled on the pillars, which repreſented the people.) This implied, that the covenant was made with them only through the blood of the atoning ſacrifice; that neither their perſons, moral obedience, or religious ſervices, would meet acceptance with a holy God, except through the ſhedding and ſprinkling of blood; that in this way, being purged from ſin, they might be preſented unto and accepted of God; that the bleſſings, granted them even by their *national covenant*, were all of mercy; and that though they were only ſecured unto them during their obedience, yet that the Lord would deal with them in kindneſs, and not conſtrue every act of diſobedience into a forfeiture of the covenant. In this manner was the buſineſs tranſacted before all the people: and thus the ſinner, by faith in the blood of Chriſt, and through his mediation, enters into covenant with God, receives the law from his merciful hands as a rule of duty; and having his heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and his perſon and all his ſervices preſented as ſprinkled with the atoning blood of Chriſt, devotes himſelf to God, and renders him willing and acceptable obedience; though he be a poor, guilty, polluted ſinner, approaching a God of infinite Majeſty, juſtice, and holineſs. (*Heb.* ix. 18—22.)

V. 10. *And they ſaw*, &c.] The ſtrong expreſſions here uſed

work of a ſapphire-ſtone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearneſs.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Iſrael he laid not his hand: alſo they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of ſtone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayeſt teach them.

13 And Moſes roſe up, and his miniſter Joſhua: and Moſes went up into the mount of God.

14 And he ſaid unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: And behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

15 And Moſes went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it ſix days: and the ſeventh day he called unto Moſes out of the midſt of the cloud.

17 And the ſight of the glory of the LORD *was* like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Iſrael.

18 And Moſes went into the midſt of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moſes was in the mount forty days, and forty nights.

CHAP.

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uſed incline many commentators to underſtand this viſion, of an appearance of the Son of God in human form, anticipating his incarnation; as he certainly did appear to the patriarchs and others. And though the expreſſion, "Ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude," (*Deut.* iv. 15,) ſeems to militate againſt this opinion: yet it may be anſwered, that this was ſpoken concerning the people in general, as receiving the law in an audible voice from the mount; but the words here uſed relate to a private audience of a few individuals ſome time after. It is ſaid of Moſes, "The *ſimilitude* of the Lord ſhall he behold."—(*Num.* xii. 8.) Chriſt is the image of the inviſible God; the effulgency of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. The two appearances under conſideration are a direct contraſt: the former was that of the holy Lawgiver and Judge, in terrible majeſty delivering to ſinners the miniſtration of condemnation; the latter that of God our Saviour, through the ſacrifice and ſprinkling of blood, admitting believers into communion with himſelf. Now it is only in Chriſt that God manifeſts himſelf as reconciled to ſinners, or admits any one of them into communion with him. (2 *Cor.* iv. 3—6.) God in Chriſt was, and is, the God of Iſrael; of him this was a gracious diſcovery, but whether in a viſible human form or no, the reader muſt be left to determine for himſelf.—If any ſhould reject the opinion of a viſible appearance in human form, the words *under his feet*, &c. muſt be underſtood figuratively, of *that* which appeared beneath the viſible glory, of which no deſcription could be given. 'This was like a pavement of ſapphires, and like the azure ſky on a clear day.' (*Ezek.* i. 26—28.)

V. 11. *He laid*, &c.] Though theſe perſons had a far more diſtinct viſion of the glory of God, than at the delivery of the law, when they ſaw nothing but clouds, darkneſs, fire, and tempeſt; yet, through the ſacrifice and the ſprinkling of blood, the Mediator, and the covenant now ratified, this glory inſpired not terror but confidence; they received no hurt, but comfort, and feaſted upon the ſacrifices in the preſence of the Lord.—Thus the believer beholding in the face of Jeſus Chriſt far clearer diſcoveries of the glorious juſtice and holineſs of God, than ever he ſaw under his moſt terrifying convictions: yet feels no diſmay, as before, nor receives any harm; but with humble confidence, through the mediation of the Saviour, holds communion with a holy God, and is inſpired with ſweet comfort, peace, and joy.

V. 13. *His miniſter Joſhua.*] Joſhua was intended to be the ſucceſſor of Moſes, and was thus trained up under him to communion with God; and gradually had honour put upon him before the people.

V. 16. *Six days*, &c.] Moſes waited all this time without, before he was introduced into the Lord's more immediate preſence. Doubtleſs he and Joſhua ſpent the time in holy conference, and in fervent exerciſes of devotion. Theſe ſix days do not appear to have been a part of the forty days and forty nights afterwards mentioned, during which Moſes faſted: but we have reaſon to think that both Moſes and Joſhua had manna to eat at this time; and Joſhua during the forty days, which he appears to have waited here for Moſes' return, and which doubtleſs he ſpent in prayer and meditation.

V. 18. *Moſes went up*, &c.] Encouraged by the call of God and the inward comforts of his grace, Moſes entered with holy boldneſs into that cloud, which to Iſrael appeared as a devouring fire: there he continued forty days and forty nights, favoured with divine diſcoveries, and receiving further inſtructions for the people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the miniſtry of the Goſpel, and in the inſpired writings, we have not only all the words and judgments, which Moſes received from the Lord, but all the meſſage of love, which the only begotten of the Father brought to ſinners, laid before us and propoſed to us. Having therefore God's oracles and ordinances amongſt us, we are under a diſpenſation of mercy, and have outward ſigns and pledges of the good-will of God to ſinners. Numbers outwardly conſent to, and receive, the external ſeals of his covenant, eat and drink in his preſence, and hear him teach in their ſtreets, to whom the Judge at laſt will ſay, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are, depart from

CHAP. XXV.

Contains God directing Moſes, 1ſt. To raiſe a voluntary collection from the Iſraelites for the building of the tabernacle, v. 1—9. *2d. How to make the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-ſeat, v.* 10—22. *3d. About the table of ſhew-bread, v.* 23—30. *4th. About the golden candleſtick, with the tongs and ſnuff-diſhes thereof, v.* 31—40.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye ſhall take my offering.

3 And this *is* the offering which ye ſhall take of them; gold, and ſilver, and braſs,

4 And blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, and goat's *hair*.

5 And rams' ſkins dyed red, and badgers' ſkins, and ſhittim-wood,

6 Oil for the light, ſpices for anointing oil and for ſweet incenſe,

7 Onyx-ſtones, and ſtones to be ſet in the ephod and in the breaſt-plate.

8 And let them make me a ſanctuary; that I may dwell amongſt them.

9 Ac-

"me all ye workers of iniquity." (*Luke*, xiii. 25—28.) And theſe will be a prey to a more terrible devouring fire, than that which afterwards conſumed Nadab and Abihu. We muſt therefore not only "ſee, that we refuſe not him "that ſpeaketh;" but, "whilſt we think we ſtand, we "muſt take heed leſt we fall;" and be very careful that we reſt not in outward privileges, forms, or notions; or in any thing ſhort of the experience of the efficacy of divine Grace upon the heart, and the ſeal of the Holy Spirit, which is the earneſt of our inheritance. The true Iſraelite hears the awful words of God's moſt holy law, and is filled with a conſciouſneſs of guilt and a fear of wrath, until he hears alſo the ſweet words of mercy and grace. But, receiving inſtruction concerning the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and the covenant made, through him with all believers, he by faith applies for his ſalvation, and accedes to this covenant; and by the ſprinkling of the Redeemer's blood has "his conſcience purged from dead "works to ſerve the living God:" then he receives from his reconciled Father's hands the book of the law, as it were ſprinkled alſo with blood, as the rule of his future delightful obedience; and with it the Spirit of adoption inclining and enabling him to obey. Thus the covenant is conſented to, and ratified; now he has acceſs to God upon a mercy-ſeat, ſees his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, enjoys communion with him, and is encouraged to ſerve him in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. And though his future life be not all one continued feaſt upon divine conſolations: yet from time to time he is thus favoured; and has generally "the peace of God, which "paſſeth all underſtanding, keeping his heart and mind "through Chriſt Jeſus;" except when by ſin he grieves the Spirit, or brings down upon himſelf the chaſtening rod of his loving Father.

But let us not forget to obſerve, that they, who would draw near to God, muſt not only come at his call, but wait for him in faith and patience, and not be weary of ſo doing; that the comforts of communion with God will compenſate for the want of all other comforts; and that the power of divine Grace can raiſe a man above the cravings of thoſe inclinations which otherwiſe are moſt importunate; and whilſt a man is enabled to approach with boldneſs to the mercy-ſeat of a reconciled Father, and finds it good to be there, he will not quickly be willing to depart thence. Finally, they, who would be honoured of God in important ſervices, muſt be willing to begin low, muſt be faithful in a little, and muſt ſpend much time in ſolitude, prayer, and meditation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1. *The Lord ſpake*, &c.] Doubtleſs Moſes in the mount, like Paul in the third heaven, ſaw and heard very glorious, and wonderful things: but it was not lawful or poſſible to utter them; and he reported nothing to the people, but thoſe things that referred to their duty.

V. 2. *Willingly with his heart.*] Of the ſpoils of the Egyptians, every Iſraelite was expected to offer for the eſtabliſhment of religious worſhip among them, according as he was diſpoſed in heart; but this oblation was not extorted by compulſion, nor regulated by preſcription. The obedience of Chriſt derived its value from being entirely voluntary: and no ſervice, which we can render, is any further acceptable, than as it ſprings freely from a willing mind. (2 *Cor.* viii. 12. ix. 5—15.)

V. 4. *Blue and purple*, &c.] That is, wool, or other materials for working into cloths, dyed of theſe colours, which were highly valued. The Lord had ſo ordered it, that the Iſraelites had received of the Egyptians all theſe ſeveral particulars towards building the tabernacle; which not only intimated favour to the Gentiles, but repreſented the uſe which God often makes of the abilities and ſubſtance of ſtrangers in ſupporting and promoting true religion.

V. 8. *A ſanctuary*, &c.] The word ſanctuary denotes an holy habitation for the Lord's immediate reſidence. This was intended for a viſible pledge and token that he was preſent with his people to protect, inſtruct, guide, and govern them, to pardon their ſins, to accept their ſervices, and to ſupply their wants. The tabernacle was alſo a type of the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, "in "whom

9 According to all that I ſhew thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the inſtruments thereof, even ſo ſhall ye make *it*.

10 And they ſhall make an ark *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits and a half *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

11 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without ſhalt thou overlay it; and ſhalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

12 And thou ſhalt caſt four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *ſhall be* in the one ſide of it, and two rings in the other ſide of it.

13 And thou ſhalt make ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold.

14 And thou ſhalt put the ſtaves into the rings, by the ſides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.

15 The ſtaves ſhall be in the rings of the ark: they ſhall not be taken from it.

16 And thou ſhalt put into the ark the teſtimony which I ſhall give thee.

17 And thou ſhalt make a mercy-ſeat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

18 And thou ſhalt make two cherubims *of* gold: *of* beaten work ſhalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-ſeat.

19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even* of the mercy-ſeat ſhall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

20 And the cherubims ſhall ſtretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy-ſeat with their wings, and their faces *ſhall look* one to another: toward the mercy-ſeat ſhall the faces of the cherubims be.

21 And thou ſhalt put the mercy-ſeat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou ſhalt put the teſtimony that I ſhall give thee.

22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-ſeat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the teſtimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Iſrael.

23 Thou

" whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily;" (*Col.* i. 19. ii. 9. *John*, ii. 19—21;) of the Church of God, which as one with him is a ſpiritual houſe; of every true believer, who as a part of that great temple, is " an " habitation of God through the Spirit;" (*Eph.* ii. 22;) and of heaven, where the preſence of God is viſibly diſplayed, and he dwells among his holy angels and redeemed ſinners, as their everlaſting felicity, and accepts their holy worſhip.

V. 9. *The tabernacle*, &c.] In the wilderneſs, and for ſome time in Canaan, the ſanctuary was only a tent or moveable building; but afterwards a temple was built upon mount Zion, and theſe typical ordinances were confined to one place. This ſeems to mark the difference between the Church on earth, and the Church in heaven: wandering and journeying through this wilderneſs, we take our religion, and the ordinances of it, along with us all the way; but in heaven there is reſt for ever for the Church of God, and no more removals.

V. 10—22.] The ark was a cheſt made of wood not liable to rot, of ſomewhat more than four feet in length, and two feet and an half in breadth and in thickneſs, plated all over both within and without with plates of gold, with a border, or cornice, of gold round about; and covered with a covering all of maſſy gold, which was called, the propitiatory, or the mercy-ſeat. In this ark were put the two tables of ſtone, which contained the law of the ten commandments: it was placed in the holy of holies; before it the blood of the ſacrifice was ſprinkled, and the incenſe burnt, by the high prieſt, on the day of atonement; and above it appeared the viſible glory, which was the ſymbol of the divine preſence. This was an evident type of Chriſt, in his ſinleſs human nature, which ſaw no corruption, in perſonal union with his divine nature, magnifying the law and covering our tranſgreſſions of it, by " having it in his heart," obeying it in his life, and atoning for ſin againſt it by his death. Through the ſprinkling of his blood, and the interceſſion which, as our High Prieſt, he makes in the true holy of holies, God appears to ſinners with mild glory upon a mercy-ſeat; and accepts the perſons and ſervices of believers, dwelling among them and abundantly bleſſing them.—*The Teſtimony*, ſignifies the tables of the law, which teſtified God's authority over the Iſraelites, his regard for them, and his preſence with them: they alſo teſtified, that whilſt he was merciful to them, he required obedience from them: and they would teſtify againſt them, if they neglected, or forſook, his ſervice and worſhip. The two cherubims were emblematical repreſentations of the angels, " deſiring to look down" into the myſteries of redeeming love, (1 *Pet.* i. 12.:) therefore they were formed with their faces towards the mercy-ſeat, as poring upon it and the myſteries which it contained, " For they are all miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalva- " tion," and *joint-worſhippers* of the ſame God of grace; even of our Emmanuel, God dwelling in human nature. (*Heb.* i. 6—14. *Rev.* v. 9—12.)

23 Thou ſhalt alſo make a table *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

24 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about.

25 And thou ſhalt make unto it a border of an hand-breadth round about, and thou ſhalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about.

26 And thou ſhalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that *are* on the four feet thereof.

27 Over againſt the border ſhall the rings be, for places of the ſtaves to bear the table.

28 And thou ſhalt make the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them.

29 And thou ſhalt make the diſhes thereof, and ſpoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof to cover withal: *of* pure gold ſhalt thou make them.

30 And thou ſhalt ſet upon the table, ſhew-bread before me alway.

31 And thou ſhalt make a candleſtick *of* pure gold, *of* beaten work ſhall the candleſtick be made: his ſhaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers ſhall be of the ſame.

32 And ſix branches ſhall come out of the ſides of it; three branches of the candleſtick out of the one ſide, and three branches of the candleſtick out of the other ſide.

33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, *with* a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, *with* a knop and a flower: ſo in the ſix branches that come out of the candleſtick.

34 And in the candleſtick *ſhall be* four bowls made like unto almonds, *with* their knops and their flowers.

35 And *there ſhall be* a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, according to the ſix branches that proceed out of the candleſtick.

36 Their knops and their branches ſhall be of the ſame: all it *ſhall be* one beaten work *of* pure gold.

37 And thou ſhalt make the ſeven lamps thereof: and they ſhall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over againſt it.

38 And the tongs thereof, and the ſnuff-diſhes thereof, *ſhall be of* pure gold.

39 *Of* a talent of pure gold ſhall he make it, with all theſe veſſels.

40 And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was ſhewed thee in the mount.

CHAP.

V. 23—30.] This table, with its furniture and uſe, ſeems to typify the communion which in his ordinances the Lord holds with his redeemed people; the proviſions of his houſe, and the feaſts with which they are ſometimes favoured; the food for their ſouls which they always find when they hunger after it; and the delight which he takes in their perſon and ſervices, as preſented in Chriſt Jeſus before him. (*Rev.* iii. 20. *Cant.* v. 1.)

V. 31—39.] This candleſtick, with its furniture and uſe, repreſents the light of God's word and Spirit, in and through Chriſt Jeſus, afforded in this dark world to his believing people, to direct their worſhip and obedience, and adminiſter to their conſolations. The tabernacle had no other light but this; no more has the Church of God on earth: but in heaven "the Lord will be unto her "an everlaſting Light, and God himſelf her Glory." (*Iſ.* lx. 19. *Rev.* xxi. 23, xxii. 5.) Many things, here regulated concerning theſe ſacred utenſils, were either intended for the conveniency of removing them, or for ornament. Thus the religion of Chriſt is appointed to accompany us through life, and is fitted to be diffuſed through all nations: there is in him all beauty and glory; and he adorns his church with the graces of the Spirit and all the beauty of holineſs. They were all appointed to be m of pure and ſolid gold, the moſt precious of metals; Chriſt is moſt precious in himſelf, and in the eſtimation the Father, of his people, and of all the inhabitants heaven. His Church alſo conſiſts of the excellent of t earth; he requires us to conſecrate unto him the beſt moſt valuable of every thing, of our time, our ſubſtanc our abilities, and eſpecially our affections; and he will cept of nothing but that which is the very beſt of the ki

V. 40. *Look that thou*, &c.] The whole of the M ſaic ceremonial was *inſtituted worſhip*, which hath ſole foundation in the ſovereign appointment of G and it was likewiſe throughout typical of Chriſt, in ſeveral characters and offices: it was therefore directed be made exactly according to the pattern ſhewn in mount. Uniformity in worſhip, as far as the tab nacle and temple ſervice was concerned, and ex conformity to a preſcribed rule, were evidently the Teſtament plan; (though it was very ſeldom adhe to;) for there is but one way of a ſinner's juſtificat and ſanctification: But the ſame exact uniformity am ourſelves, and conformity to a preſcribed rule in *minute externals* of worſhip, could never be inten

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains directions, concerning 1*ſt. The inner curtains, the ſecond curtains, and the two-fold covering of the ſanctuary, v.* 1—14. 2*d. The boards, ſockets, and bars thereof, v.* 15—30. 3*d. The vail, and the ſeparation between the holy place, and the moſt holy place; the diſpoſal of the furniture in the ſanctuary, and the hanging for the door of it, v.* 31—37.

MOREOVER thou ſhalt make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and ſcarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work ſhalt thou make them.

2 The length of one curtain *ſhall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain, four cubits: and every one of the curtains ſhall have one meaſure.

3 The five curtains ſhall be coupled together one to another: and *other* five curtains *ſhall be* coupled one to another.

4 And thou ſhalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the ſelvedge in the coupling: and likewiſe ſhalt thou make in the uttermoſt edge of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the ſecond.

5 Fifty loops ſhalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops ſhalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that *is* in the coupling of the ſecond; that the loops may take hold one of another.

6 And thou ſhalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it ſhall be one tabernacle.

7 And

under the new diſpenſation: the very diſputes, which this ſubject has ſo long occaſioned, are a complete demonſtration that no ſuch exact and explicit rule ſubſiſts; for if they did, the controverſy muſt ceaſe of courſe, or rather could never have been ſtarted. The old ritual is evidently antiquated, and nothing of the ſame kind is ſubſtituted in its place: therefore a latitude is allowed us by the Lord, and we have no right to cenſure, deſpiſe, or condemn others; or to impoſe our own ſentiments and practices on them: only we muſt remember, that we are accountable to God for the uſe which we make of this liberty; and take heed that we do not reject the truths or commandments of God to keep our own traditions; or lay any ſtreſs, or place any dependence, on things of this kind, further than a mere circumſtance, expedient in our judgment for *our own* more regular attendance on God's ordinances, profeſſion of his truths, and obedience to his commandments. (Note xx. 4).

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all things the Lord is beforehand with us: we can preſent nothing to him, but what was previouſly his gift to us: and in the great concerns of ſalvation, his love ſuggeſted the gracious deſign, his wiſdom formed the wonderful plan; the Father loved the world, and gave his Son; the Son loved us, and gave himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins; his word reveals this ſalvation; his providence by ſpecial deſignation hath ſent it to us; the ordinances, in which he will meet us, are of his appointment, and are rendered effectual by his bleſſing; and his preventing grace produces at firſt the willing mind to attend on them. But whilſt he reveals himſelf in Chriſt Jeſus, as a reconciled Father upon a mercy-ſeat, affords us the light of his word, and promiſes the teaching of his holy Spirit, to direct us to the Bread of life, and guide us into ſweet communion with him, that we may feaſt upon the plenteouſneſs of his holy temple: he reaſonably requires that we diligently attend on his ordinances, come to his mercy-ſeat, enquire his will, feed upon the Bread of life, ſeek and walk in the light of his word and Spirit; that we preſent our bodies, ſouls, ſubſtance, and all we are, to him, to be employed according to his commandment, and allowance; and that we, with a willing and liberal mind, according to the ability which he giveth us, do actually ſeparate to his ſervice, both for the ſupport of religion and communicating to the poor a proportion of our ſubſtance, to prove the ſincerity of our faith and love. If we have no heart ſo to do, we have no proof that we are his true people: if we have indeed a willing mind, and give the beſt we have in ſimplicity, we may take the comfort of this good evidence; but we muſt give God the glory of his grace beſtowed upon us; (2 *Cor.* viii. 1.) And though no exact proportion be preſcribed, yet the Lord ſaith, that "he which "ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he which "ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully:" That is, in peace and aſſurance on earth, and in abundant glory in heaven. Finally, let us remember, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, have the law of God in our hearts, live a life of communion with God, feaſt on his ordinances, and are the light of the world; if indeed we be Chriſtians. God help us to try ourſelves by, and walk according to, this view of Chriſtianity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 6. *One tabernacle.*] Theſe rich curtains are generally called the tabernacle; having been the moſt coſtly covering of the whole building. They were formed of the moſt valuable materials, and wrought with the moſt exquiſite ſkill; they were embroidered with the emblematical repreſentation of angels, as uniting in the worſhip of Iſrael's God. Being divided into two parts, five curtains were joined together in each part, for greater

7 And thou ſhalt make curtains *of* goats' *hair* to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains ſhalt thou make.

8 The length of one curtain *ſhall be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains *ſhall be all* of one meaſure.

9 And thou ſhalt couple five curtains by themſelves, and ſix curtains by themſelves, and ſhalt double the ſixth curtain in the fore-front of the tabernacle.

10 And thou ſhalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain *that is* outmoſt in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the ſecond.

11 And thou ſhalt make fifty taches of braſs, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one.

12 And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half-curtain that remaineth, ſhall hang over the back-ſide of the tabernacle.

13 And a cubit on the one ſide, and a cubit on the other ſide of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it ſhall hang over the ſides of the tabernacle, on this ſide, and on that ſide, to cover it.

14 And thou ſhalt make a covering for the tent, *of* rams' ſkins died red, and a covering above *of* badgers' ſkins.

15 And thou ſhalt make boards for the tabernacle, *of* ſhittim-wood, ſtanding up.

16 Ten cubits *ſhall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and an half *ſhall be* the breadth of one board.

17 Two tenons *ſhall there be* in one board, ſet in order one againſt another: thus ſhalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

18 And thou ſhalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the ſouth ſide, ſouthward.

19 And thou ſhalt make forty ſockets of ſilver, under the twenty boards: two ſockets under one board for his two tenons, and two ſockets under another board for his two tenons.

20 And for the ſecond ſide of the tabernacle on the north ſide, *there ſhall be* twenty boards,

21 And their forty ſockets *of* ſilver: two ſockets under one board, and two ſockets under another board.

22 And for the ſides of the tabernacle weſtward, thou ſhalt make ſix boards.

23 And two boards ſhalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two ſides.

24 And they ſhall be coupled together beneath, and they ſhall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus ſhall it be for them both; they ſhall be for the two corners.

25 And they ſhall be eight boards, and their ſockets *of* ſilver, ſixteen ſockets: two ſockets under one board, and two ſockets under another board.

26 And thou ſhalt make bars *of* ſhittim-wood: five for the boards of the one ſide of the tabernacle.

27 And five bars for the boards of the other ſide of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the ſide of the tabernacle for the two ſides weſtward.

28 And

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greater conveniency in removing them: theſe five curtains were united together by taches, or buttons of gold, and loops; and thus were ſpread over the top of this moveable building as its roof, and hung down nearly to the ground on each ſide.

V. 7—14.] Theſe curtains of meaner materials, being made both longer and broader, were caſt over, and completely covered, the others, and were defended from the weather by a two-fold covering of ſkins. The whole repreſents the perſon and doctrine of Chriſt, the Church of true Chriſtians, and all heavenly things; which are outwardly, and to the carnal eye, mean, but are inwardly, and in the ſight of God, exceedingly glorious and precious. The ſecure protection which he prepares for thoſe who are inwardly precious in his ſight, may alſo be denoted: and the unity of the whole, formed of ſo many pieces and of ſuch different materials, into one covering of the ſanctuary, repreſents the ſpiritual temple formed of perſons of different nations, diſpoſitions, abilities, and attainments, compacted together into one church, by the uniting influence of the Spirit of love.

V. 15—29.] The ſockets of ſilver each weighing a talent, (xxxviii. 27,) that is about an hundred weight, were placed in rows upon the ground; forty on the ſouth, forty on the north, twelve on the weſt, and two at each of the corners on the weſt end. In every couple of theſe ſockets, and

28 And the middle bar in the midſt of the boards ſhall reach from end to end.

29 And thou ſhalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings *of* gold *for* places for the bars: and thou ſhalt overlay the bars with gold.

30 And thou ſhalt rear up the tabernacle according to the faſhion thereof which was ſhewed thee in the mount.

31 And thou ſhalt make a vail *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims ſhall it be made.

32 And thou ſhalt hang it upon four pillars of ſhittim-*wood*, overlaid with gold: their hooks *ſhall be of* gold, upon the four ſockets of ſilver.

33 And thou ſhalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayeſt bring in thither within the vail, the ark of the teſtimony: and the vail ſhall divide unto you, between the holy *place* and the moſt holy.

34 And thou ſhalt put the mercy-ſeat upon the ark of the teſtimony, in the moſt holy *place*.

35 And thou ſhalt ſet the table without the vail, and the candleſtick over againſt the table on the ſide of the tabernacle toward the ſouth: and thou ſhalt put the table on the north ſide.

36 And thou ſhalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work.

37 And thou ſhalt make for the hanging five pillars *of* ſhittim-*wood*, and overlay them with gold, *and* their hooks *ſhall be of* gold: and thou ſhalt caſt five ſockets of braſs for them.

CHAP.

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by two tenons fitted to the hollows of them, was fixed a ſubſtantial board of ſhittim-wood covered with plates of gold. The boards ſeem alſo to have been united together in a ſimilar manner. Thus a wall was formed on the two ſides, and on the weſt end of the ſanctuary; and this was further ſtrengthened by bars of wood covered with gold, that ran through rings of gold, and compacted the whole together ſo cloſely, that it could not be ſhaken much more eaſily than a ſtone building. Over this the curtains were ſpread. Though it was a moveable ſtructure, and eaſily taken down and put together again, its materials were very coſtly, and its ſtability very great; in all which it was a type of the Church of God, "built upon the foundation "of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being "the chief corner ſtone, in whom all the building fitly "framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the "Lord." (*Eph.* ii. 20, 21.)

V. 31—33.] This vail ſeparated the holy place, or what the apoſtle calls *the firſt tabernacle*, from *the moſt holy place*, (*Heb.* ix. 6), and it was hung upon pillars fixed in ſockets of ſilver, in the manner of the boards. Of theſe things we need *at preſent* ſpeak no more, than juſt to hint, that ſin had excluded man from the gracious preſence of God, ſo that nothing ſhort of the death of Chriſt could remove the obſtacle, rend the vail, and give him free acceſs with boldneſs to the mercy-ſeat.

V. 36, 37.] This hanging formed the eaſt end of the building, and the entrance into the ſanctuary. In veneration of the riſing ſun, many of the Heathens worſhipped towards the eaſt: but Iſrael was required to proteſt againſt that idolatry, by turning their backs upon the eaſt, in worſhipping God; for we muſt diſregard the moſt precious creatures, when they would divert our homage and affections from the Creator.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

With this typical deſcription of Chriſt and his Church before our eyes, let us aſk ourſelves what is our judgment of theſe matters? Do we ſee any glory in the perſon of Chriſt? any excellency in his character, or preciouſneſs in his ſalvation; or wiſdom in the doctrine of the croſs? Do we perceive any beauty in holineſs, or any amiableneſs in the character of Chriſtians? Theſe things are hid under external meanneſs from the carnal eye of the ſuperficial obſerver, but are diſcovered by the ſpiritual eye of every true believer, who ſees through the exterior covering the internal glory and hidden excellency which are in heavenly things. As our judgment, choice, and conſequent practice are, ſo is our ſtate towards God. "To you that believe, He is precious." Let us alſo examine ourſelves as to the ſtate of our own hearts; whether we poſſeſs an *inward* conſciouſneſs of dependence on, and love to, the Lord, hatred of ſin, and deſire after holineſs, and a purpoſe of heart through divine Grace to glorify him? Will our religion bear examination? and are we more careful to approve our hearts to God, than our characters to men? (1 *Pet.* iii. 4.) Notwithſtanding all our imperfections, this ſtate of mind is in the ſight of God of great price. The hypocrite is the reverſe of all this: he keeps up a ſpecious appearance before men, but he ſhrinks from examination; for "his inward part is "very wickedneſs," and God knows it.—Thus alſo the Chriſtian's comfort and his inheritance are not an outſide ſhew of mirth and proſperity, covering an aching heart, and a ſoul doomed to deſtruction, but an inward ſweetneſs and peace unobſerved of men, and a glorious inheritance reſerved within the vail. Nay, the mean ap-

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains directions concerning, 1ſt. The making of the brazen altar for burnt ſacrifice, v. 1—8. *2d. The court of the tabernacle, with its hangings and entrance, v.* 9—19. *3d. The oil for the lamp, or candleſtick, with the ordering of it, v.* 20, 21.

AND thou ſhalt make an altar *of* ſhittim-wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar ſhall be four-ſquare, and the height thereof *ſhall be* three cubits.

2 And thou ſhalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns ſhall be of the ſame: and thou ſhalt overlay it with braſs.

3 And thou ſhalt make his pans to receive his aſhes, and his ſhovels, and his baſons, and his fleſh-hooks, and his fire-pans: all the veſſels thereof thou ſhalt make *of* braſs.

4 And thou ſhalt make for it a grate of net-work of braſs; and upon the net ſhalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof.

5 And thou ſhalt put it under the compaſs of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midſt of the altar.

6 And thou ſhalt make ſtaves for the altar, ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with braſs.

7 And the ſtaves ſhall be put into the rings, and the ſtaves ſhall be put upon the two ſides of the altar to bear it.

8 Hollow with boards ſhalt thou make it: as it was ſhewed thee in the mount, ſo ſhall they make *it*.

9 And thou ſhalt make the court of the tabernacle for the ſouth ſide, ſouthward: *there ſhall be* hangings for the court *of* fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long, for one ſide,

10 And the twenty pillars thereof, and their twenty ſockets *ſhall be of* braſs: the hooks of their pillars, and their fillets *ſhall be of* ſilver.

11 And likewiſe for the north ſide in length, *there ſhall be* hangings of an hundred *cubits* long, and his twenty pillars, and their twenty ſockets *of* braſs: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

12 And *for* the breadth of the court, on the weſt ſide, *ſhall be* hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their ſockets ten.

13 And the breadth of the court on the eaſt ſide, eaſtward, *ſhall be* fifty cubits.

14 The hangings of one ſide *of the gate ſhall be* fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

15 And on the other ſide *ſhall be* hangings fifteen *cubits:* their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

16 And for the gate of the court *ſhall be* an hanging of twenty cubits, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen wrought with needle-work: *and* their pillars *ſhall be* four, and their ſockets four.

17 All the pillars round about the court, *ſhall be* filleted with ſilver: their hooks *ſhall be of* ſilver, and their ſockets *of* braſs.

18 The length of the court *ſhall be* an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, *of* fine twined linen, and their ſockets *of* braſs.

19 All the veſſels of the tabernacle in all

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pearance of the Church, and of the Chriſtian, is often a ſecurity from perſecution and temptation. As every part of this ſpiritual building of God, in ſubſerviency to his power and love, conduces to the ſtability of the whole, let us conſider how much it behoves us to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: and let us watch againſt diſcontent, envy, ambition, and contention; and each in his proper place ſtudy to ſerve the common intereſts of genuine Chriſtianity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *An altar*, &c.] The altar before mentioned ſeems to have only been intended for the preſent purpoſe, until further orders were given; and eſpecially for thoſe ſacrifices with which the national covenant was ratified. (xx. 24. xxiv.)

V. 2. *Horns.*] The horns were turrets, or pinnacles, on the four corners of the altar; to which at ſome times the animals about to be ſacrificed were bound. (*Pſ.* cxviii. 17.) The altar was entirely covered with thick plates of braſs, with a place to receive the fuel and lay the fleſh upon, very curiouſly formed, to prevent the wood being conſumed by the fire: as the human nature of Chriſt could not have ſupported the fire of the divine wrath for ſin, had it not been in union with his divinity.

V. 3. *Baſons.*] In theſe was received the blood of the ſacrifices, in order to its being ſprinkled.

V. 9—19.] The tabernacle, when ſet up, was incloſed in

the ſervice thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court *ſhall be of* braſs.

20 And thou ſhalt command the children of Iſrael, that they bring the pure oil-olive beaten, for the light, to cauſe the lamp to burn always.

21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which *is* before the teſtimony; Aaron and his ſons ſhall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *It ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever unto their generations, on the behalf of the children of Iſrael.

in a court, between fifty and ſixty yards long, and between twenty-five and thirty broad; formed by curtains hung upon brazen pillars, fixed in brazen ſockets after the manner of the boards of the ſanctuary: and having an entrance at the eaſt end, ſimilar to the entrance of that building. Within this incloſure the prieſts and Levites offered the ſacrifices, and hither the people were admitted: the prieſts had acceſs into the ſanctuary; but none, except the high prieſt, into the holy of holies, and that but one day in a year: yet was the whole people of Iſrael a kingdom of prieſts and an holy nation, compared with the Heathens. The whole is ſuited to teach us, how far ſin hath ſeparated betwixt us and a holy God; and what difficulties bar our re-union: the whole evinces the falſhood of that proud ſentiment, which repreſents man's poor ſervices, as *in themſelves* acceptable and meritorious before God; for even this kingdom of prieſts could not approach the *very mercy-ſeat* of God, in their own perſons, or with their own ſervices however coſtly; but only by their repreſentative, their typical mediator, with the ſprinkling of blood, and the burning of incenſe. Theſe diſtinctions alſo repreſented the difference betwixt the viſible nominal church, and the true ſpiritual church, which alone hath acceſs to, and communion with, God.

V. 20, 21.] The candleſtick with its ſeven lamps would afford no light, unleſs they were ſupplied with oil. The lamps were lighted and ordered by the prieſts, who probably tended them all night.—Even the word of God will not truly enlighten our hearts, without the unction of the Holy Ghoſt, (1 *John*, ii. 20. 27,) which is communicated to us through that great High Prieſt, whom Aaron and his ſons typified, and who walketh continually amidſt his golden candleſticks: (*Rev.* ii. 1.) But miniſters in opening and applying the word of God, and by their prayers for a bleſſing on it, as well as Chriſtians in their ſeveral ſituations, may be inſtrumental in diffuſing abroad the divine light in this dark world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Of what vaſt importance in true religion muſt the perſon, the prieſthood, and the ſacrifice of the Son of God be, when they are forced upon our attention in ſuch a variety of types, and repreſentations!—It is true that he is our

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The appointment of Aaron and his ſons to the prieſthood, v. 1. 2d. The directions for making the holy garments for the high prieſt, conſiſting of the ephod and girdle, the breaſt-plate of judgment with Urim and Thummim, the robe of the ephod, the mitre, and the coat of fine linen, v. 2—39. 3d. Directions for making the garments of the other prieſts, v. 40—43.

AND take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his ſons with him, from among the children of Iſrael, that he may miniſter

prophet, and we muſt ſubmit to his teaching, our King, and we muſt willingly obey him, our example, and we muſt imitate him.—But he is alſo our Altar, our Prieſt, our Sacrifice, our Mediator; and we were never truly taught by him, nor ever yield him the obedience of faith, if he have not taught us to truſt in him as ſuch; to come to the Father, as loſt ſinners, through him, the only Way, Truth and Life; and to draw all our ſufficiency for obedience from his fulneſs, as the fountain of Grace, as well as to build on his merits as the foundation of our hope.—Whilſt we bleſs God that we are within the incloſure of his viſible church, and favoured with the means of Grace, let us be careful that we reſt not in this outward court of profeſſion, but be of the number who truly have fellowſhip with the Father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.—And whether we are miniſters, or private Chriſtians, let us carefully tend the lamp of God's word, that we may both walk in the light ourſelves, and be inſtrumental in communicating it to others.—Not forgetting to join our prayers, that he may ſend forth able miniſters to diffuſe this light all over the world: for, bleſſed be God, it is not now confined to the Jewiſh tabernacle; but is a light to lighten the Gentiles, and for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1. *Take*, &c.] Intimations had before been given of this deſignation; but this is the firſt expreſs appointment of Aaron and his ſons to the prieſthood. The heads of families had hitherto officiated as prieſts, and offered ſacrifices without any ſpecial appointment; but now this practice was reſtricted, and the ſacerdotal office confined to the family of Aaron only. Moſes not only gave a proof of his diſintereſtedneſs, in leaving his own poſterity in the rank of private Levites, whilſt he confirmed Aaron and his deſcendants in this important and honourable ſervice, but he made it manifeſt, that he acted entirely by divine directions; (*Heb.* v. 4, 5;) which is further evinced by the remarkable circumſtance of no proviſion being made about the ſucceſſion to the prieſthood, in caſe Aaron's family ſhould be extinct. This was according to human obſervation very probable, eſpecially after the death of Nadab and Abihu, and muſt have been

miniſter unto me in the prieſts' office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's ſons.

2 And thou ſhalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty.

3 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto all *that are* wiſe-hearted, whom I have filled with the ſpirit of wiſdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to conſecrate him, that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office.

4 And theſe *are* the garments which they ſhall make; a breaſt-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they ſhall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his ſons, that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office.

5 And they ſhall take gold, and blue, and purple and ſcarlet, and fine linen.

6 And they ſhall make the ephod *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, *of* ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

7 It ſhall have the two ſhoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and and *ſo* it ſhall be joined together.

8 And the curious girdle of the ephod which *is* upon it, ſhall be of the ſame, according to the work thereof; *even of* gold, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 And thou ſhalt take two onyx-ſtones, and grave on them the names of the children of Iſrael.

10 Six of their names on one ſtone, and *the other* ſix names of the reſt on the other ſtone, according to their birth.

11 With the work of an engraver in ſtone, *like* the engravings of a ſignet, ſhalt thou engrave the two ſtones, with the names of the children of Iſrael: thou ſhalt make them to be ſet in ouches of gold.

12 And thou ſhalt put the two ſtones upon the ſhoulders of the ephod, *for* ſtones of memorial unto the children of Iſrael. And Aaron ſhall bear their names before the Lord, upon his two ſhoulders for a memorial.

13 And thou ſhalt make ouches *of* gold;

14 And two chains *of* pure gold at the ends: *of* wreathen work ſhalt thou make them, and faſten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

15 And

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followed by the entire ſubverſion of the whole form of worſhip inſtituted by Moſes: for it was fundamental to it that no perſon in any age, or in any caſe, ſhould officiate as prieſt under the penalty of death, except he were of Aaron's family. Yet in entire confidence that God would provide for the continuance of the religion which he had appointed, and being conſcious that he acted by his authority, Moſes left the whole dependent on an apparent mere contingency; this human policy never would have done. But the providence of God took care of that, which was thus ſimply committed to him; and the prieſts of the family of Aaron increaſed, and continued as long as that diſpenſation continued, and until the new diſpenſation was introduced.

V. 2. *Holy garments.*] Whatever was ſeparated from common uſes, and conſecrated to the immediate ſervice of God, was called HOLY, whether it were perſon, or thing. Theſe garments were not only intended to diſtinguiſh the prieſts from the people, and to decorate them and render their perſons and miniſtrations reſpected by the people; but they were emblematical of that holy converſation and conduct, which ſhould ever be the "glory, " and beauty," the diſtinguiſhing mark of the miniſters of religion; without which they and the ſervices they perform will be had in contempt. They were alſo eſpecially typical of the glory of the divine majeſty, and the beauty of complete holineſs, which rendered Jeſus Chriſt ſuch an High Prieſt as became us, and ſtamped infinite value on his whole work.

V. 3. *Wiſe-hearted*, &c.] Whoever is endued with ſkill to perform the ſervice aſſigned to him in the Church of God, and does it uprightly and diligently, is "*wiſe-*" *hearted*," and will give God the glory of making him ſo. All natural wiſdom is the gift of God, but this ſeems to have been ſupernaturally beſtowed.

V. 6—14.] The ephod, or the prieſt's outer garment, was a ſhort coat without ſleeves. Ephods were worn by the inferior prieſts, and even by others on ſome occaſions, as by Samuel when a child, and by David when he danced before the ark: but they were made only of linen. This ephod of gold was formed of coſtly materials, and had much gold wrought up in it; it was girded on by a girdle curiouſly woven, or wrought, of the ſame materials, and was buttoned upon each ſhoulder with a precious ſtone ſet in gold; on theſe two ſtones were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael, which buttons were faſtened into chains of gold. Thus Chriſt appeared to John "girt " about the paps with a golden girdle:" "righteouſneſs " was the girdle of his loins;" "he was clad with zeal as " a cloak," and "the government was upon his ſhoul- " ders:" for he bears the names of his people before God as a memorial; and as their Repreſentative and Advocate with all his power acts in their behalf, and maintains their cauſe.

V. 15—29.

15 And thou ſhalt make the breaſt-plate of judgment with cunning work: after the work of the ephod thou ſhalt make it; *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, and *of* ſcarlet, and *of* fine twined linen ſhalt thou make it.

16 Four-ſquare it ſhall be *being* doubled; a ſpan *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a ſpan *ſhall be* the breadth thereof.

17 And thou ſhalt ſet in it ſettings of ſtones, *even* four rows of ſtones: *the firſt* row *ſhall be* a ſardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: *this ſhall be* the firſt row.

18 And the ſecond row *ſhall be* an emerald, a ſapphire, and a diamond.

19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyſt.

20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jaſper: they ſhall be ſet in gold in their incloſings.

21 And the ſtones ſhall be with the names of the children of Iſrael, twelve, according to their names; *like* the engravings of a ſignet, every one with his name ſhall they be according to the twelve tribes.

22 And thou ſhalt make upon the breaſt-plate chains at the ends, *of* wreathen work, *of* pure gold.

23 And thou ſhalt make upon the breaſt-plate two rings of gold, and ſhalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breaſt-plate.

24 And thou ſhalt put the two wreathen *chains* of gold in the two rings *which are* on the ends of the breaſt-plate.

25 And *the other* two ends of the two wreathen *chains*, thou ſhalt faſten in the two ouches, and put *them* on the ſhoulder-pieces of the ephod before it.

26 And thou ſhalt make two rings of gold, and thou ſhalt put them upon the two ends of the breaſt-plate, in the border thereof, which *is* in the ſide of the ephod inward.

27 And two *other* rings of gold thou ſhalt make, and ſhalt put them on the two ſides of the ephod, underneath towards the fore-part thereof, over againſt the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

28 And they ſhall bind the breaſt-plate, by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that *it* may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breaſt-plate be not looſed from the ephod.

29 And Aaron ſhall bear the names of the children of Iſrael in the breaſt-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy *place*, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

30 And thou ſhalt put in the breaſt-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they ſhall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron ſhall bear the judgment of the children of Iſrael upon his heart, before the LORD continually.

31 And

V. 15—29.] The breaſt plate of judgment was a doubled piece of cloth, a ſpan ſquare, richly wrought, and faſtened with chains of gold, to the ephod of gold upon the breaſt of the high prieſt. In this breaſt-plate were fixed twelve precious ſtones of different kinds, (an emblem of the divers excellences which are found in the ſeveral members of the Church of Chriſt, who among them poſſeſs all that is truly valuable upon earth;) ſet in gold, each with the name of its tribe engraved upon it. It is not certain whether Ephraim and Manaſſeh had each a diſtinct ſtone, or whether they were accounted for one tribe in Joſeph: or whether Levi had any ſtone, or was accounted ſufficiently repreſented in the high prieſt himſelf, who was of that tribe. This breaſt-plate Aaron wore, when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord; not only that he might preſent the cauſe of Iſrael before him; but to remind him that he acted in a public character, and was to have the intereſt of all the tribes whom he repreſented, near his heart, without any prejudice or partiality. This was an evident type of Chriſt, who has the name even of every individual of his people engraven upon his heart; and within the vail will be ſure never to forget or neglect any of them, or of their concerns, however deſtitute or deſpicable they may be upon earth; but will care for them with his whole heart.

V. 30. *Urim and Thummim.*] It does not appear what the Urim and Thummim were; if indeed there was any thing put into the breaſt-plate called by theſe names. The paſſage may be rendered thus, "Thou ſhalt add to the "breaſt-plate of judgment *illuminations and perfections*," and it ſeems only to denote the uſe which was to be made of it. When the high prieſt, either before the vail or elſewhere, as Iſrael's repreſentative, put on this breaſt-plate of judgment with the Urim and Thummim, to enquire for them before the Lord what they were to do, he was

31 And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all *of* blue.

32 And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work, round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent.

33 And *beneath*, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates *of* blue, and *of* purple, and *of* scarlet round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about.

34 A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.

35 And it shall be upon Aaron, to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy *place* before the LORD, and when he cometh out; that he die not.

36 And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre: upon the fore-front of the mitre it shall be.

38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

39 And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre *of* fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle *of* needle-work.

40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.

41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him: and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priests' office.

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illuminated to form a right judgment and to give perfect counsel, in the most difficult matter; which was suggested to him either by a voice from heaven, or by an immediate prophetical impulse upon his mind. Thus Christ is our High Priest with Urim and Thummim, and imparts unto us, by his word and Spirit, wisdom, judgment, and grace, from the Father of lights and the giver of every good and perfect gift.

V. 31—35.] The robe of the ephod was the middle garment, which was worn under the ephod, and above the coat. (39.) It had a hole, through which the head passed when it was put on; and it seems to have been formed carefully of one piece, that it should not be rent. This reminds us of Christ's coat, which was without seam, woven from the top throughout, and was not rent but cast lots for by the soldiers; which was emblematical of his perfect uninterrupted obedience to the divine law, and of the unbroken harmony which should subsist in his Church.—Upon the hem of this robe were golden bells, and pomegranates round about; which may represent the sound of divine truth preached or professed, being joined with the precious fruits of holiness in the ministers of the Gospel and in true Christians: and it especially typified the glad tidings, which Christ is anointed to preach, and the fragrant fruits of his priesthood which he confers upon his Church. The bells were also intended to give notice to the people when the high priest entered into the most holy place, perhaps that they might join his burning the incense and sprinkling the blood, with their prayers, (*Luke*, i. 10.) It is added, "That he die not;" which he might expect to do, if he acted not according to the prescribed rules.

V. 36—38.] Upon the mitre, which was a sort of cap with a high crown made of linen, was affixed a golden plate, on which was inscribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD, that was to be worn on the high priest's forehead, when he officiated before the Lord. This might teach him to remember his sacred office and character, and to take care not to disgrace it, nor to be ashamed of it, or wish to conceal it: it might also remind the people to honour his person, and ministrations. But especially it represented our great High Priest, whose perfect holiness and voluntary dedication of himself in our behalf unto the Father, to fulfil his will and magnify his law, by his obedience unto death have prepared the way for his being made to us sanctification, by the supply of his holy Spirit: through the same he also bears the iniquity of our holy things, and by his prevailing intercession renders our sinful persons and imperfect services acceptable with an holy God.

V. 39. *Coat of fine linen*, &c.] This was the innermost garment, which had sleeves to the wrist, as it is supposed, and was bound on with a linen girdle.

V. 40, 41.] The garments of the inferior priests, though neither so costly as those of the high priest, nor so particularly described, are said to be for "glory, and for "beauty," as well as the others. They typified that holiness, which was glorious and beautiful in Christ; and which is for glory and beauty to all who are adorned with it.

42 And

42 And thou ſhalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedneſs: from the loins even unto the thighs they ſhall reach.

43 And they ſhall be upon Aaron, and upon his ſons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to miniſter in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die. *It ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever unto him, and his ſeed after him.

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, Directions, 1ſt. For the conſecration of the prieſts, by waſhing, arraying, and anointing them with oil and blood; and by offering ſacrifices for them during ſeven days, v. 1—35. 2d. For the conſecration of the altar, v. 36, 37. 3d. For the daily ſacrifice, with gracious promiſes, v. 38—46.

AND this *is* the thing that thou ſhalt do unto them to hallow them, to miniſter unto me in the prieſts' office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemiſh,

2 And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: *of* wheaten flour ſhalt thou make them.

3 And thou ſhalt put them into one baſket, and bring them in the baſket, with the bullock and the two rams.

4 And Aaron and his ſons thou ſhalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and ſhalt waſh them with water.

5 And thou ſhalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breaſtplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod.

6 And thou ſhalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.

7 Then ſhalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.

8 And

V. 42. *And thou*, &c.] The prieſts were clothed in the moſt decent and modeſt manner. Our garments were firſt neceſſary to hide the ſhame of a ſinner's nakedneſs; and when we uſe them for oſtentation, we fooliſhly glory in our ſhame; they, who prefer ornament to modeſty, do ſtill worſe: but it is worſt of all to be guilty of this pride and indecency in the courts of the Lord's houſe.

V. 43. *That they*, &c.] All this was to impreſs the prieſts and people with a ſenſe of God's holineſs, and of their ſinfulneſs; and to teach us, that God will be had in reverence of all them that are round about him, and will not be approached by a ſinner but in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed be God, that we have ſuch an High Prieſt, as is in this chapter typically delineated; one ſolemnly appointed of God and conſecrated to his work; furniſhed for his high office by the glory of his divine majeſty, and the beauty of perfect holineſs; who bears the names of all his people, on his ſhoulders and upon his heart, preſenting them, and all their ſeveral caſes, before the Father in heaven, and ever living by his continual interceſſion, to apply the ſalvation which his ſacrifice has purchaſed; in whom are illuminations and perfections, even inexhauſtible treaſures of wiſdom and grace, to be communicated to them; who, HOLINESS TO THE LORD himſelf, is made ſanctification to his people, that they might be holineſs unto the Lord alſo, in and through him, in their meaſure in this world, perfectly in that to come. Happy are we, if by the law ſpiritually underſtood we have ſo obtained the knowledge of ſin, as to ſee that ſuch an High Prieſt became us: that we can have no acceſs to or acceptance with an holy God, but by him: no light, no wiſdom, no perfection but from him; no glory or beauty, but in conformity to him. If this be our judgment, and experience, let us take encouragement from the power, love, and compaſſion of our High Prieſt to the meaneſt of his people, "to draw near with boldneſs to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (*Heb.* iv. 14—16.) Yet "let us have grace to worſhip him with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a conſuming fire." (*Heb.* xii. 28, 29.) Let us make a bold profeſſion of his truth, accompanied with the fruits of righteouſneſs in our lives: and making him our counſellor, by whom we may enquire of the Lord, let us ſeek to profit by his illuminations and perfections, that we may be wiſe-hearted for every ſervice to which God ſhall appoint us. Daily meditating upon his word, let us endeavour, "with open face as in a glaſs, ſo to behold his glory, that we may be changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 *Cor.* iii. 18.) Clothed in his righteouſneſs for glory and for beauty, who in his death hath borne the iniquity of our holy things, let us through him as his ſpiritual prieſts, offer unto God the ſacrifice of praiſe continually, giving thanks unto his name.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 6. *Holy Crown*, &c.] That is, the golden plate which was inſcribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This being called a crown may intimate, that the true High Prieſt ſhould alſo be a King.

V. 7. *Anointing oil.*] The compoſition of this oil is preſcribed in the next chapter. The preparation of Chriſt for his prieſtly work may here be typified: and

8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them.

9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, (Aaron and his sons) and put the bonnets on them: and the priests' office shall be their's for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

10 And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.

11 And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

12 And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.

13 And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *that is* above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and burn *them* upon the altar.

14 But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it *is* a sin-offering.

15 Thou shalt also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

16 And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle *it* round about upon the altar.

17 And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put *them* unto his pieces, and unto his head.

18 And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it *is* a burnt-offering unto the LORD: it *is* a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

19 And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

20 Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their

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we should not forget, that as the high priest was washed, as well as clothed with his robes, and anointed with holy oil; so Christ, though no sinner, yet being "made in "the likeness of sinful flesh," previous to his solemn entrance on his work, submitted to the baptism of John, which was an ordinance, that in its general use denoted the washing away of the pollution of sin; as this washing of the priests also did. He was likewise anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, not for himself only, but for all his people, even the meanest; which was represented by the pouring the oil upon the head of Aaron, "that ran down to the skirts of his garments," *Ps.* cxxxiii. 2.)—But this whole consecration seems particularly to denote the admission of sinners into the spiritual priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. They must first be washed from all their filthiness in regeneration; they must be clothed in that righteousness, which is upon all them that believe; they must be anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghost, and have an interest in the one great sacrifice for sin; before they can glorify God as his holy Priesthood, or rejoice in their own precious privileges.

V. 9. *Consecrate*, &c.] The literal translation is, "Thou "shalt fill the hands of Aaron and his sons:" probably this was done by putting the sacrifice into their hands, to be waved before the Lord.—The ministers of God have their hands filled, when they enter upon their office, and will continue to have their hands full of work of one sort or other, if they duly seek for it and attend unto it: but more covet the emolument, or honour of the ministry, than seek to have their hands filled with its work.—And indeed the case is the same with all Christians, each has his hands filled with work, if he have but his heart disposed to do it, (*Mark*, xiii. 34).

V. 10. *Put their hands*, &c.] By laying their hands on the head of the sacrifice, the confession of their guilt was implied; which was thus typically transferred to the sacrifice, that it might be expiated by it: for the priests themselves were sinners; but not so our great High Priest, (*Heb.* vii. 26—28.)

V. 12. *Upon the*, &c.] The altar itself was first to be cleansed, made atonement for, and sanctified, by sacrifice and the application of blood, before it could sanctify the gift, (xxxvi. xxxvii). For every creature of God upon earth has been so abused and polluted by man's sin, that none is deemed meet to be set apart for his immediate service, till purged with blood: and all our ministrations are so defiled, that our best would condemn us, even our most solemn sacrifices, unless sprinkled with the blood of Christ. All this was evidently intended to teach the Israelites the holiness of God, the defiling nature of sin, their own sinfulness, and their need of the promised Saviour, who should take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

V. 13. *And*, &c.] We shall have a more suitable opportunity of entering upon the consideration of the sacrificial laws, and shall therefore at present wave it.

V. 20, 21.] This implied that the priests could neither hear the Lord's command, do his work, or walk in his ways; but through the application of atoning blood; which is always

their right foot, and ſprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

21 And thou ſhalt take of the blood that *is* upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and ſprinkle *it* upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his ſons, and upon the garments of his ſons with him: and he ſhall be hallowed, and his garments, and his ſons, and his ſons' garments with him.

22 Alſo thou ſhalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and the right ſhoulder; for it *is* a ram of conſecration:

23 And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the baſket of the unleavened bread, that *is* before the LORD.

24 And thou ſhalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his ſons; and ſhalt wave them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

25 And thou ſhalt receive them of their hands, and burn *them upon* the altar for a burnt-offering, for a ſweet ſavour before the LORD: it *is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

26 And thou ſhalt take the breaſt of the ram of Aaron's conſecration, and wave it *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: and it ſhall be thy part.

27 And thou ſhalt ſanctify the breaſt of the wave-offering, and the ſhoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up of the ram of the conſecration, *even* of *that* which *is* for Aaron, and of *that* which *is* for his ſons.

28 And it ſhall be Aaron's and his ſons' by a ſtatute for ever, from the children of Iſrael: for it *is* an heave-offering: and it ſhall be an heave-offering from the children of Iſrael of the ſacrifice of their peace-offerings, *even* their heave-offering unto the LORD.

29 And the holy garments of Aaron ſhall be his ſons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be conſecrated in them.

30 *And* that ſon that is prieſt in his ſtead ſhall put them on ſeven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to miniſter in the holy *place*.

31 And thou ſhalt take the ram of the conſecration, and ſeethe his fleſh in the holy place.

32 And Aaron and his ſons ſhall eat the fleſh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the baſket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

33 And they ſhall eat thoſe things, wherewith the atonement was made, to conſecrate *and* to ſanctify them: but a ſtranger ſhall not eat *thereof*, becauſe they *are* holy.

34 And if ought of the fleſh of the conſecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning; then thou ſhalt burn the remainder with fire: it ſhall not be eaten, becauſe it *is* holy.

35 And thus ſhalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his ſons, according to all *things* which I have commanded thee: ſeven days ſhalt thou conſecrate them.

36 And thou ſhalt offer every day a bullock *for* a ſin-offering, for atonement: and thou ſhalt cleanſe the altar, when thou haſt made an atonement for it, and thou ſhalt anoint it to ſanctify it.

37 Seven days thou ſhalt make an atonement for the altar and ſanctify it: and it ſhall be an altar moſt holy: whatſoever toucheth the altar ſhall be holy.

38 Now this *is that* which thou ſhalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the firſt year, day by day continually.

39 The

always accompanied with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The further particulars of this conſecration ſhall be ſpoken of, when we read of theſe orders being carried into execution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed be God our High Prieſt is not altogether like the high prieſts of the family of Aaron.—He indeed is ſolemnly ſet apart to his office, and has his hands filled; for he has the intereſts of all his people to maintain, and their cauſe to plead; and has all power in heaven and earth given unto him for that purpoſe: he is alſo clothed with majeſty and honour, and has not only the anointing, but the fulneſs, of the Spirit treaſured up in himſelf. But he needed not to offer any ſacrifices for himſelf; and by

39 The one lamb thou ſhalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou ſhalt offer at even.

40 And with the one lamb a tenth-deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil: and the fourth part of an hin of wine *for* a drink-offering.

41 And the other lamb thou ſhalt offer at even, and ſhalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a ſweet ſavour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

42 *This ſhall be* a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD: where I will meet you, to ſpeak there unto thee.

43 And there I will meet with the children of Iſrael, and *the tabernacle* ſhall be ſanctified by my glory.

44 And I will ſanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will ſanctify alſo both Aaron and his ſons, to miniſter to me in the prieſts' office.

45 And I will dwell amongſt the children of Iſrael, and will be their God.

46 And they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongſt them: I *am* the LORD their God.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains directions concerning, 1ſt. The altar of incenſe, and its uſe, v. 1—10. 2d. The half ſhekel of ranſom money, v. 11—16. 3d. The brazen laver and its uſe, v. 17—21. 4th. The holy anointing oil, and the incenſe, v. 22—38.

AND thou ſhalt make an altar to burn incenſe upon: *of* ſhittim-wood ſhalt thou make it.

2 A cubit *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, (four-ſquare ſhall it be) and two cubits *ſhall be* the height thereof: the horns thereof *ſhall be* of the ſame.

3 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the ſides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou ſhalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.

4 And two golden rings ſhalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two ſides of it ſhalt thou make *it:* and they ſhall be for places for the ſtaves to bear it withal.

5 And thou ſhalt make the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold.

6 And thou ſhalt put it before the vail, that

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one ſingle ſacrifice he hath fully atoned for all the ſins of all his people, and opened for them the gates of heavenly bliſs. But are we of that number? Do we waſh our ſinful ſouls "in the fountain, which he hath opened for ſin "and for uncleanneſs;" conſcious that in ourſelves we need ſuch waſhing? Do we preſent ourſelves before God day by day, arrayed in the prieſtly garments of his righteouſneſs, truſting only in his merits, and not at all in ourſelves or in our ſervices, for acceptance with God? Are we anointed with the unction of the Holy Spirit, purifying our hearts from the love of ſin, and ſhedding abroad in them the love of God? Do we, in confeſſion of ſins, and the exerciſe of faith, lay our hands upon the head of this great Sacrifice? And are our hearts and conſciences cleanſed by his blood from dead works to ſerve the living God; and our bodies preſented, not as a burnt-offering, but as a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; whilſt the members thereof, which once were inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, are now made inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto him? Do we maintain daily communion with him, preſenting our morning and evening ſacrifice of ſecret and family worſhip, acceptable through the atoning ſacrifice of "the Lamb of God, who taketh away "the ſin of the world?" And are our hands filled with his work, and our time and talents offered to the Lord as a wave-offering, and improved to his glory? Is this the ſincere intention, and aim of our hearts, all the day long? —Alas! how little do the moſt of profeſſing Chriſtians know of this ſpiritual conſecration unto God through Chriſt Jeſus! yet all the reſt is but the name, and the form; this, and nothing ſhort of this, is the religion of the "royal "prieſthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, whom "he hath called out of darkneſs into marvellous light, "to ſhew forth his praiſe." (1 *Pet.* ii. 5—9.) Let us not then reſt in any thing ſhort of it, but preſs forward to this mark: then will God ſpeak to us in his Word, meet us in his ordinances, make himſelf known to us as our God and Saviour, and fill our hearts with his holy conſolations.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 6. *Before the vail, &c.*] This altar, formed, like the ark, of incorruptible wood covered over with pure gold, repreſented the Son of God in human

that *is* by the ark of the teſtimony; before the mercy-ſeat, that *is* over the teſtimony, where I will meet with thee.

7 And Aaron ſhall burn thereon ſweet incenſe every morning: when he dreſſeth the lamps he ſhall burn incenſe upon it.

8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he ſhall burn incenſe upon it; a perpetual incenſe before the LORD, throughout your generations.

9 Ye ſhall offer no ſtrange incenſe thereon, nor burnt-ſacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither ſhall ye pour drink-offering thereon.

10 And Aaron ſhall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the ſin-offering of atonements: once in the year ſhall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations: it *is* moſt holy unto the LORD.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

12 When thou takeſt the ſum of the children of Iſrael, after their number; then ſhall they give every man a ranſom for his ſoul unto the LORD, when thou numbereſt them: that there be no plague amongſt them, when *thou* numbereſt them.

13 This they ſhall give, every one that paſſeth among them that are numbered; half a ſhekel, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, (a ſhekel *is* twenty gerahs) an half-ſhekel *ſhall be* the offering of the LORD.

14 Every one that paſſeth among them that are numbered from twenty years old and above, ſhall give an offering unto the LORD.

15 The rich ſhall not give more, and the poor ſhall not give leſs than half a ſhekel, when *they* give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your ſouls.

16 And thou ſhalt take the atonement-money of the children of Iſrael, and ſhalt appoint it for the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Iſrael before the LORD, to make an atonement for your ſouls.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, 18 Thou

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in human nature: and the incenſe burnt on it typified his interceſſion, as the altar of burnt-offering and its oblations typified his ſacrifice. The former was therefore placed within the ſanctuary, the latter in the court without; for his ſacrifice was offered on earth, his interceſſion is in heaven. But it was not fixed *in* the *moſt holy place*; becauſe the *continual* interceſſion of Chriſt was repreſented by the daily burning of incenſe upon it morning and evening by the other prieſts, as well as the high prieſt: ſo that this ſituation would have interfered with the ſolemn inſtitution of the *annual* entrance of the high prieſt alone within the vail, on the day of atonement only, and at no other time; which had a very important ſignification. It was therefore placed on the *outſide* of the vail, yet over againſt the mercy-ſeat.

V. 7, 8.] The one ſacrifice of Chriſt's death was efficacious in behalf of believers every day from the beginning, and ſhall be the ſame to the end of the world; this was repreſented by the daily ſacrifice: his interceſſion is unremitting and perpetual, which was repreſented by the daily burning of incenſe.—The dreſſing and lighting the lamps prefigured the preaching of the word, which could only be rendered effectual by the interceſſion of Chriſt bringing down a bleſſing, in anſwer to the prayers with which it is accompanied.

V. 9, 10.] The application of the blood of atonement to the altar of incenſe denoted, that the interceſſion of Chriſt in heaven, derives all its efficacy from his ſufferings on earth: and therefore the prieſts muſt confine that altar to its preſcribed uſe; for we need no other ſacrifice or interceſſor but Chriſt alone.

V. 11—16.] This ſum, which was about fifteenpence a-piece of our money, was employed at this time in forming the ſilver ſockets and other parts of the ſanctuary: but was generally, as it is ſuppoſed, expended in purchaſing ſacrifices, wood, and other things, for the ſervice of the ſanctuary. Probably it was a tribute paid ever after, though now firſt raiſed, either annually, or as often as was neceſſary; and the ſame that was demanded of Chriſt. (*Matt.* xvii. 24—27.) Other contributions were voluntary, and in proportion to the ability or liberality of the offerer: but this was the ranſom of their ſouls, and was the ſame ſum for every man above twenty years of age, whether rich or poor; and if any refuſed to pay it, they could have no intereſt in the ſacrifices, and might expect to be viſited with the plague for their contempt. For the ſouls of all are of equal value, equally forfeited, and equally need a ranſom: Chriſt is equally propoſed to all who hear the Goſpel; and true believers have an equal intereſt in him: without which, we can have no benefit from his ſacrifice; but inſtead of ranſom for our ſouls, may expect additional vengeance, for neglecting and deſpiſing ſuch great ſalvation. And though we can add nothing to the all-ſufficient atonement of Chriſt, which is freely, without money and without price, given to periſhing ſinners who believe: yet we may, by our worldly ſubſtance, aſſiſt in maintaining the expences of religious ordinances, which are memorials to us of the atonement made for our ſouls.

V. 18—21.]

18 Thou ſhalt alſo make a laver *of* braſs, and his foot *alſo of* braſs, to waſh *withal:* and thou ſhalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou ſhalt put water therein.

19 For Aaron and his ſons ſhall waſh their hands and their feet thereat.

20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they ſhall waſh with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to miniſter, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD.

21 So they ſhall waſh their hands and their feet, that they die not; and it ſhall be a ſtatute for ever to them, *even* to him, and to his ſeed throughout their generations.

22 Moreover the LORD ſpake unto Moſes ſaying,

23 Take thou alſo unto thee principal ſpices, of pure myrrh five hundred *ſhekels*, and of ſweet cinnamon half ſo much, *even* two hundred and fifty *ſhekels*, and of ſweet calamus two hundred and fifty *ſhekels*,

24 And of caſſia five hundred *ſhekels*, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, and of oil-olive an hin.

25 And thou ſhalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it ſhall be an holy anointing oil.

26 And thou ſhalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the teſtimony.

27 And the table and all his veſſels, and the candleſtick and his veſſels, and the altar of incenſe,

28 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his veſſels, and the laver and his foot.

29 And thou ſhalt ſanctify them, that they may be moſt holy: whatſoever toucheth them, ſhall be holy.

30 And thou ſhalt anoint Aaron and his ſons, and conſecrate them, that *they* may miniſter unto me in the prieſts' office.

31 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, This ſhall be an holy anointing oil unto me, throughout your generations.

32 Upon man's fleſh ſhall it not be poured, neither ſhall ye make *any other* like it, after the compoſition of it: it *is* holy, *and* it ſhall be holy unto you.

33 Whoſoever compoundeth *any* like it, or whoſoever putteth *any* of it upon a ſtranger, ſhall even be cut off from his people.

34 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Take unto thee ſweet ſpices, ſtacte, and onycha, and galbanum; *theſe* ſweet ſpices with pure frankincenſe: of each ſhall there be a like *weight*.

35 And thou ſhalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure *and* holy.

36 And thou ſhalt beat *ſome* of it very ſmall, and put of it before the teſtimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it ſhall be unto you moſt holy.

37 And *as for* the perfume which thou ſhalt make, you ſhall not make to yourſelves according to the compoſition thereof: it ſhall be unto thee holy for the LORD.

38 Whoſoever ſhall make like unto that, to ſmell thereto, ſhall even be cut off from his people.

CHAP.

V. 18—21.] The laver of braſs was a large ciſtern, in which was continually kept a quantity of water; and perhaps the foot was a baſon, which received the water out of the ciſtern by a cock, or ſome other contrivance, for immediate uſe. For the prieſts, though waſhed at their conſecration, were commanded on pain of death to waſh their hands and feet every time they officiated, intimating the continual guilt, which they contracted in their daily employments, and converſe with the world. (*John*, xiii. 8—11.)

V. 22—33.] This ointment, compounded of the moſt valuable ingredients, with which the prieſts, the altar, and all the ſacred furniture were anointed, repreſented the ſanctifying influences of the Holy Ghoſt; without which, we cannot attend upon any ordinance, or officiate in any ſacred ſervice, acceptably or profitably. The compounding of any like it, or uſing it for ordinary purpoſes, denoted hypocriſy which counterfeits, and profaneneſs which ridicules, the operations of the Spirit, and brings down ſwift deſtruction on thoſe who are guilty of them.

V. 34—38.] This was the incenſe before ſpoken of, that was burnt upon the golden altar. They who take occaſion, from the doctrine of Chriſt's interceſſion

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. The appointment of the persons who were to be employed in erecting and furnishing the tabernacle, with promises to them of suitable qualifications, v. 1—11. *2d. Laws concerning the sabbath, v.* 12—17. *3d. The tables of the law delivered to Moses, v.* 18.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.

4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,

5 And in cutting of stones to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.

cession and grace, to indulge in sin, and they who make intercessors of saints and angels, alike violate the spirit of the restriction hereto annexed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If men do not wilfully shut their eyes to the things which are written in the word of God, they cannot but see in these ceremonial institutions, compared with the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is the grand subject of the Scriptures; and the sum of all true religion, as "made "of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctifica-"tion, and redemption." To suppose that the New Testament language concerning his priesthood, oblation, entrance into the holiest, and intercession for his people, were accommodations to these Old Testament rites, is to suppose that, in building the spiritual temple, the all-wise Architect, without any intention, planned and formed a very intricate and unnecessary scaffolding, and then erected the building for the sake, and according to the pattern, of that scaffolding! But "known unto God are all his works from before the "foundation of the world." He first formed the model of the Gospel salvation in his own infinite mind, then shewed that model to Moses in the mount, according to the pattern of which this scaffolding was formed, for the sake of the intended building; which accordingly has since been erected, exactly answerable thereto.—From this chapter let us observe, that our duty, and our indigence, call upon us daily to approach our Creator and benefactor, with our thanksgivings and supplications: but that we are not worthy to draw nigh in our own name, or in any other way, than through the meritorious and prevailing intercession of the Son of God. Though we are *without* on earth, and he is ascended into heaven, and is out of our sight; let us by faith behold him, and realize him to our minds, as ever living to receive and present our worship, perfumed with the sweet incense of his intercession before the Father's mercy-seat for acceptance. Let us therefore not be slack, unfrequent, or doubtful in our supplications; but ask abundantly and constantly, and expect copious blessings in answer to our poor prayers, that our joy may be full and our God be glorified. Blessed be his name, the Priest, the sacrifice, the incense, and anointing oil, are all ready prepared to our hands, without any concurrence of ours: but if we know the value of this great salvation, we shall not grudge either time, labour, or expence, which the maintaining, or attending on, divine ordinances may require; and it is to be feared that we have no interest in the sacrifice, if we hesitate to contribute thereto. Nor should we forget that the poor are as welcome to Christ as the rich; and the rich as much in want of his ransom for their souls as the poor; for in this grand concern no external distinctions make any difference: and all are alike bound to express their valuation of Christ, and of his salvation. (*Rom.* iii. 22.) Even they, who are washed, in their first conversion, from the sins of their past lives, and from prevailing sin in their hearts, have occasion for renewed repentance, forgiveness, and grace, from day to day: and must still approach as sinners washed in the blood, anointed by the Spirit, and pleading the merits of Jesus. But let us beware of rendering a religious profession subservient to our secular interests; of treating heavenly things with irreverence or contempt; of counterfeiting or ridiculing the operations of the Spirit; or of gratifying our sinful inclinations under the pretence of Christian liberty: for these are most dangerous and fatal perversions of the Gospel of Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI. V. 3—5.] It could not be supposed that the Israelites, who had been employed as bond-slaves in Egypt, were qualified for such curious workmanship as had been prescribed; any more than that the apostles, taken from their fishing boats, and other low occupations, were capable of conversing in the languages of all nations, to whom they were commanded to preach: but, by the operation of the same Spirit which gave *them* utterance in divers tongues, these persons here appointed seem to have been miraculously endued with the requisite skill: though they might have acquired some knowledge in particular branches of these ingenious arts, which are thought to have been very successfully cultivated in Egypt at this early period. Neither Moses, nor Aaron, nor any of Aaron's sons were appointed to this service; the honour already conferred, must suffice for them; and if they attended to their proper work, they would find that also sufficient. Nor were Moses's sons appointed; for it was the Lord's will that his disinterestedness and divine legation should appear illustrious, in the *obscurity* of his posterity: and if Hur was (as some think) Miriam's husband, and in consequence Bezaleel a distant relation of Moses, the appointment of him was the Lord's doing; that there might be no occasion given for murmuring and envy.

6 And I, behold, I have given with him, Aholiab the ſon of Ahiſamach of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wiſe-hearted I have put wiſdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee:

7 The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the teſtimony, and the mercy-ſeat that *is* thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle,

8 And the table and his furniture, and the pure candleſtick with all his furniture, and the altar of incenſe,

9 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot,

10 And the clothes of ſervice, and the holy garments for Aaron the prieſt, and the garments of his ſons, to miniſter in the prieſts' office,

11 And the anointing oil, and ſweet incenſe for the holy *place:* according to all that I have commanded thee, ſhall they do.

12 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

13 Speak thou alſo unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Verily my ſabbaths ye ſhall keep: for it *is* a ſign between me and you, throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD, that doth ſanctify you.

14 Ye ſhall keep the ſabbath therefore: for it *is* holy unto you. Every one that defileth it ſhall ſurely be put to death: for whoſoever doeth *any* work therein, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from amongſt his people.

15 Six days may work be done, but in the ſeventh *is* the ſabbath of reſt, holy to the LORD: whoſoever doeth *any* work in the ſabbath-day, he ſhall ſurely be put to death.

16 Wherefore the children of Iſrael ſhall keep the ſabbath, to obſerve the ſabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant.

17 It *is* a ſign between me and the children of Iſrael for ever: for *in* ſix days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the ſeventh day he reſted, and was refreſhed.

18 And he gave unto Moſes, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of teſtimony, tables of ſtone, written with the finger of God.

CHAP.

V. 13. *Verily*, &c.] The Iſraelites were forbidden to violate the ſabbath reſt, even when building the temple. That appointment was a token of God's eſpecial regard to them; and of their peculiar relation to him, as the worſhippers of that God, who created the world in ſix days and reſted on the ſeventh. Whilſt, at his command, for his honour, and in his worſhip, they ſanctified this day, it would both diſtinguiſh them from all other people as the covenant people of God, and be a means of promoting true godlineſs amongſt them.

V. 14, 15.] By this penal ſanction the obſervation of the ſabbath, which before was a part of the *moral* law, the rule of conſcience with reference to the judgment of God, now became alſo a *judicial* law, and a rule of the magiſtrate's duty in the execution of his office.

V. 17. *Was refreſhed.*] Such ſatisfaction did the Lord take in the manifeſtation of his glory in his works! and ſuch refreſhment ſhould we find in contemplating them, in giving him the praiſe, and in performing the duties of the holy ſabbath!

V. 18. *And*, &c.] Theſe tables of ſtone, both framed and engraved by God himſelf, denote the perpetual obligation of the moral law; not perhaps without reference to the ſtony heart of man, by which this law can never be ſpiritually underſtood, cordially approved, and delighted in, except God himſelf both prepare the heart, and write it there by his own Spirit. (xxiv. 12).

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord confers his *unmerited* favours on whom he pleaſes: but the honour, which cometh from him, is always attended with a work to be done: and indeed to be employed for God is the higheſt honour, and the nobleſt privilege: (*Pſalm* ciii. 20, 21.) Although men are not now called forth by name, as in the days of Moſes; yet the Lord generally marks out the perſons, whom he hath made choice of, endowing them with correſpondent diſpoſitions and qualifications by his Spirit, and opening the way to their work in his providence. We may indeed certainly know that we are not appointed to any ſervice, for which we continue utterly unqualified: yet there are caſes, in which men are unexpectedly and evidently called to ſituations, for which they feel themſelves conſciouſly inſufficient; but they may depend upon God to give them "the "Spirit of wiſdom, underſtanding, and knowledge" for it, even after they are engaged in it; if they ſimply ſeek his glory, do his will, and are employed by him. The Lord is pleaſed to confer differing gifts on different perſons, by which they may feel their need of each other, and receive mutual benefit, as the members in the human body: let then each perſon mind his proper work, and improve his own talent diligently; remembering that whatever wiſdom any man poſſeſſes, the Lord hath put it in his heart

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1*ſt. Iſrael weary of waiting for Moſes's return, and perſuading Aaron to make a graven image; Aaron prevailed upon, the golden calf made and worſhipped, v.* 1—6. 2*d. The Lord informing Moſes of their idolatry, threatening to deſtroy them, and Moſes interceding for them, v.* 7—14. 3*d. Moſes deſcending from the mount, witneſſing the wickedneſs of the people, breaking the tables of the law, deſtroying the golden calf, expoſtulating with Aaron, and his unmeaning excuſe, v.* 15—24. 4*th. The Levites ſummoned and commiſſioned by Moſes, and ſlaying three thouſand of the criminals, v.* 25—29. 5*th. Moſes again pleading with the Lord in the behalf of Iſrael, v.* 30—35.

AND when the people ſaw that Moſes delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themſelves together unto Aaron, and ſaid unto him, Up, make us gods which ſhall go before us: for *as for* this Moſes, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron ſaid unto them, Break off the golden ear-rings which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your ſons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron.

4 And he received *them* at their hand, and faſhioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they ſaid, Theſe *be* thy gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And

heart, to the end that he may do *all* his commandments. Let no one envy, deſpiſe, intermeddle with, or depreciate, the gift, or work of others: and let every one ſtudy to be quiet, and to do his own buſineſs; and to rejoice in the ſuperior endowments of others, without murmuring or diſputing, or by oſtentation provoking the envy or reſentment of others. Every work is beautiful in its ſeaſon; but the more immediate exerciſes of religion belong eſpecially to the ſanctification of the ſabbath: and as the appointment thereof is an *external* ſign of the Lord's good will to ſinful men; ſo our love to it, and delight in hallowing it, is a good *internal* evidence, that he hath begun and will continue to ſanctify our ſouls.—May the Lord therefore have mercy upon us, pardon all our tranſgreſſions, take away the heart of ſtone, and write *this* and all his laws in our inmoſt ſouls: then, though every ſweet ſeaſon of communication with God on earth muſt come to a cloſe, we ſhall at length be admitted into his preſence in heaven, where there is fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1. *And when*, &c.] Juſt when Moſes, Iſrael's faithful repreſentative, had tranſacted all their great concerns upon the mount, and was coming down, fully inſtructed and authoriſed to erect the tabernacle and ſet up the worſhip of God among them; a ſad interruption took place, through Iſrael's ſhameful diſobedience.—The people ſeem to have been weary of waiting ſo long at Sinai; (though, had they properly applied their minds, they would have found the time ſhort enough for the proper digeſting of what they had heard:) and whilſt ſome of them in heart turned back into Egypt, (*Acts*, vii. 39, 40,) others were perhaps in great haſte for the corn and wine, the milk and honey of Canaan.—But the grand evil was, that their carnal minds did not reliſh the ſpiritual worſhip of an inviſible holy God.—They doubtleſs had witneſſed in Egypt religious feaſts ſuited to a ſenſual mind; and they expected the ſame in the feaſt, which they were to hold unto the Lord: but in this they were grievouſly diſappointed, and the whole was a very ſerious, diſreliſhing, painful buſineſs to them. Moſes therefore being out of the way, they formed the project of a religious feaſt more ſuited to their taſte, which when they had ſolemnized, they intended to leave Sinai, and to march either back into Egypt, or forward to Canaan—They, who duly conſider in what manner *religious feſtivals* are obſerved amongſt millions of profeſſing Chriſtians, will readily perceive how agreeable *ſuch a religion* muſt be to a ſenſual mind, as conſiſts "in ſitting down to eat and to drink, "and riſing up to play;" that is to dance, and ſing, and divert themſelves.—In forwarding this project they pretended that they "wot not what was become of this Moſes," of whom they ſpake with the utmoſt indifference: they would intimate, that the fire had conſumed him, or that he was periſhed with hunger, or perhaps was taken up into heaven.—Indeed they had no reaſon to doubt but he was ſafe, and faithfully employed for them, and that he would in due time return to them: but ſuppoſing he had been dead, ſurely a decent reſpect ſhould have been ſhewn to his memory: and had they then queſtioned whether Aaron and Hur ſhould ſucceed him, or ſome other perſons be appointed, there might have been an appearance of reaſon in it; but to propoſe making them gods, becauſe Moſes was gone, ſhewed them "mad upon their idols," and glad of any pretence to return to them.—Not much above forty days before they had heard God ſpeak unto them out of the midſt of the fire, whilſt they ſaw no ſimilitude; and he had expreſsly prohibited them to form any image of him: that fire, and the cloud attending it, were ſtill before their eyes, all the other wonders were freſh in their memories; they daily ate of the manna from the clouds, and drank of the water from the rock: "yet even in Horeb "they forgat God their Saviour," aſcribed their departure out of Egypt, firſt to the man Moſes, whom they neither knew any thing of or cared any thing about, and then to the

5 And when Aaron ſaw *it*, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made proclamation, and ſaid, To-morrow *is* a feaſt to the LORD.

6 And they roſe up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people ſat down to eat and to drink, and roſe up to play.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go, get thee down: for thy people, which thou broughteſt out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themſelves*.

8 They have turned aſide quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worſhipped it, and have ſacrificed thereunto, and ſaid, Theſe *be* thy gods, O Iſrael, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, I have ſeen this people, and behold, it *is* a ſtiff-necked people.

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Moſes beſought the LORD his God, and ſaid, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot againſt thy people, which thou haſt brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Where-

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the idol which they had formed! Such was this aſtoniſhing tranſaction! (*Pſalm* cvi. 19—21.)—They required Aaron to make them Gods; that is, a viſible repreſentation of the object of their worſhip; for even theſe idolaters were not ſtupid enough to think the image itſelf really was God. (4. 5.) It is the very ſame word in the original, which is every where uſed for the true God; (Note, *Gen.* i. 1,) though it is joined with a plural verb, which is not common in that uſe of it.

V. 4, 5.] If the conduct of Iſrael as a people be ſurpriſing, much more ſo was that of "Aaron, the ſaint "of the Lord!" Many conjectures have been made of his reaſons for acting in this manner; but his conduct ſeems to have been too unreaſonable to be either excuſed, or accounted for. He expreſſed no reluctancy: and though he could ſpeak well, he ſaid nothing againſt it, but entered into the project with apparent approbation and zeal.—Indeed we can only ſay that the Lord permitted it, that it might appear of what man is capable; and to ſhew that the prieſthood was given him of *mere grace*, when he might juſtly have been cut off for his tranſgreſſion; that he might wear his honours the more humbly ever after, (as Peter did after denying his Lord;) that when the ſin-offering of conſecration was offered, he might indeed feel his need of the atonement; and that it might appear we needed an High Prieſt of another ſort and of a nobler order. The Jews indeed have a tradition that Hur was killed for oppoſing the project, and that Aaron feared the ſame fate: but if ſo, Aaron would have had a better excuſe before Moſes. He might indeed be frighted, but he had not ſuch juſt cauſe. The demand of the golden ear-rings has been conſtrued into an attempt to put the people off from their purpoſe; and as there was much gold in their camp beſides this, it looks more like an heſitation, than any other circumſtance: but if ſo intended, it was a feeble project.—They readily parted with them, and he as readily, (I wonder where he obtained his ſkill!) melted, moulded them, and haſtily formed a rough reſemblance of a calf, which was one of the Egyptian deities: with this they were mightily well pleaſed; and though probably but a clumſy repreſentation of a beaſt, they ſtupidly conſidered it as a very proper ſimilitude of the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt! for it is evident that they intended to worſhip Jehovah by it. (*Ezek.* xx. 8. xxiii. 8.) Yet this was infinitely diſhonourable to his incomprehenſible majeſty, and no better than "turning their glory into the ſimilitude of an ox, that "eateth graſs." Our wonder, however, at Iſrael's and Aaron's conduct may be ſomewhat abated, when we conſider how great a part of the profeſſing Chriſtian Church hath for ages concurred in, pleaded for, and vindicated ſimilar practices, in as direct oppoſition to the written word of God, as this was to the law, which Iſrael had juſt heard from mount Sinai; and with no better excuſes than Aaron could have pleaded had not Moſes ſilenced him.—But when the word of God coincides not with our intereſts, inclinations, and prejudices, the chief diſcovery of man's ingenuity is manifeſted, in explaining it away.

V. 7. *For thy people*, &c.] As the people ſeemed to renounce their relation to God, by aſcribing their deliverance out of Egypt, firſt to Moſes, and then to the golden calf: God therefore ſeemed to renounce his relation to them, and called them the people of Moſes, whom he had brought out of Egypt.

V. 9. *Stiff-necked.*] That is, ſtubborn and untractable, like unruly bullocks, upon whoſe neck the yoke could not be put without great difficulty.

V. 10. *Let me alone*, &c.] Whilſt Moſes continued praying, the Lord was, as it were, rendered incapable of proceeding to extremities againſt the people, even though his righteous indignation prompted him to do ſo. This, which ſeemed to forbid, really encouraged, the prayer of Moſes, and he acted accordingly.—This propoſal of exceedingly multiplying his poſterity, that the promiſes made to the patriarchs, which Iſrael had forfeited, might be entailed on his family, was intended to prove the ſincerity of his love, and the extent of his diſintereſtedneſs.

V. 11—14.] In this prayer, Moſes, without either mentioning the propoſal which the Lord had made to him

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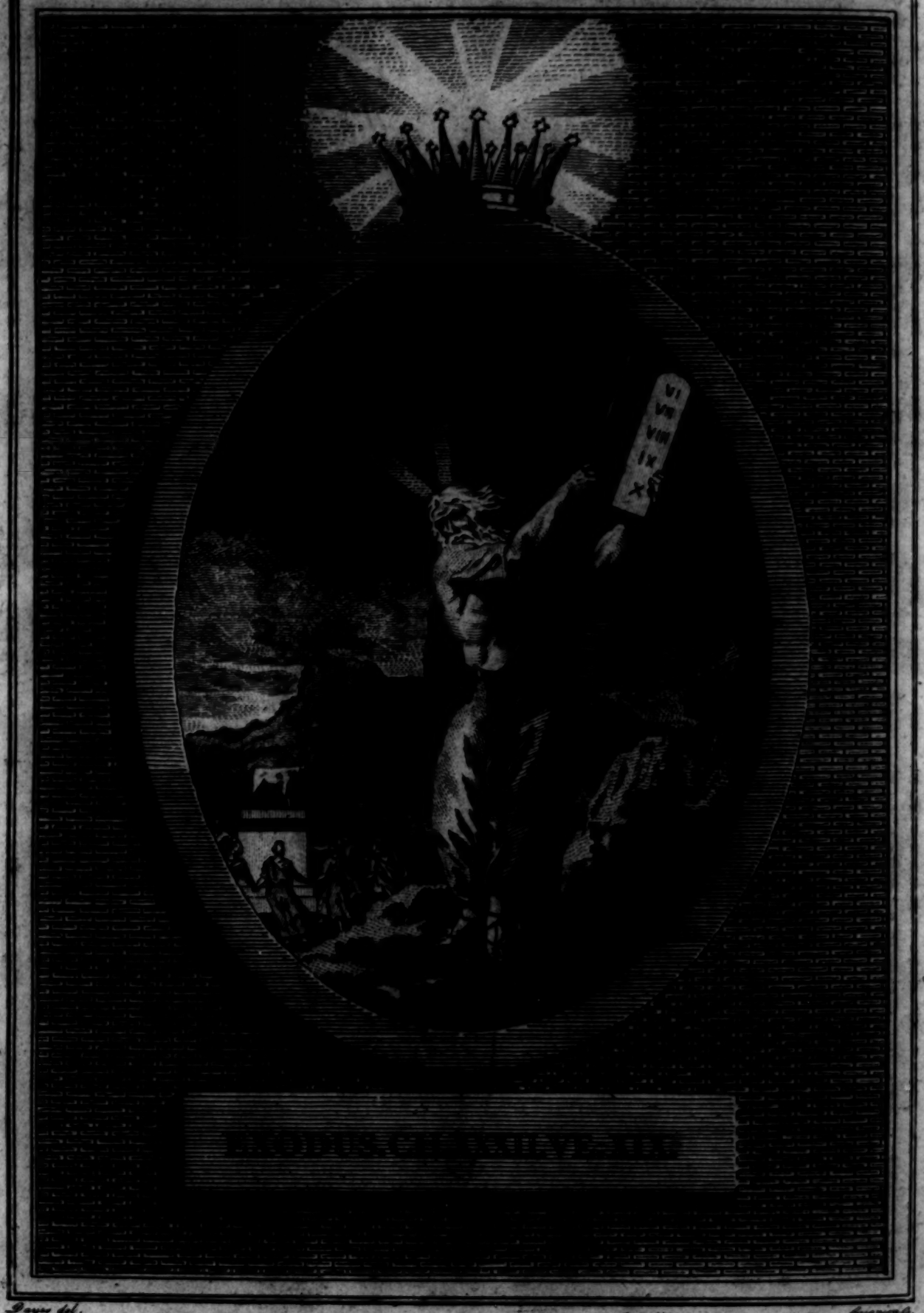

Payne del. Heath sc.

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12 Wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak and ſay, For miſchief did he bring them out, to ſlay them in the mountains, and to conſume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil againſt thy people.

13 Remember Abraham, Iſaac, and Iſrael, thy ſervants, to whom thou ſwareſt by thine own ſelf, and ſaidſt unto them, I will multiply your ſeed as the ſtars of heaven, and all this land that I have ſpoken of will I give unto your ſeed, and they ſhall inherit *it* for ever.

14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

15 And Moſes turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the teſtimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their ſides; on the one ſide and on the other *were* they written.

16 And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God graven upon the tables.

17 And when Joſhua heard the noiſe of the people as they ſhouted, he ſaid unto Moſes, *There is* a noiſe of war in the camp.

18 And he ſaid, *It is* not the voice of *them that* ſhout for maſtery, neither *is it* the voice of *them that* cry for being overcome: *but* the noiſe of *them that* ſing do I hear.

19 And it came to paſs as ſoon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he ſaw the calf, and the dancing: and Moſes's anger waxed hot, and he caſt the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and ſtrawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Iſrael drink *of it*.

21 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou haſt brought ſo great a ſin upon them?

22 And Aaron ſaid, Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot: thou knoweſt the people that they *are ſet* on miſchief.

23 For they ſaid unto me, Make us gods which ſhall go before us: for *as for* this Moſes, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

24 And I ſaid unto them, Whoſoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off: So they gave *it* me: then I caſt it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

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or attempting to palliate the ſin of the people, pleads only in their behalf the glory of the divine perfections as concerned in the event: for if the Lord deſtroy Iſrael, (of whom he ſays "Thy people, whom *thou* haſt brought out,") the Egyptians will impeach his juſtice and goodneſs: nor could their deſtruction be *apparently* reconciled with his promiſe and oath to Abraham, Iſaac, and Iſrael: and whatever their ſin deſerved, it would not be for the glory of Jehovah, to give occaſion to ſuch injurious reflections being caſt upon his own great name. This regard to the divine honour was well-pleaſing to the Lord, who in anſwer to his prayers, intimated his purpoſe of ſparing them, as he had before *ſeemed* determined upon their deſtruction; which change of the *external diſcovery* of his purpoſe is called "repenting of the evil," &c. (*Pſalm* cvi. 19—23. *Numb.* xiv. 13—20.)

V. 17. *Joſhua*, &c.] Joſhua had waited patiently during all the forty days, in the place where Moſes had left him, below the ſummit of the mount, at a diſtance from the people, and out of the way of their ſin and temptation.

V. 19. *Caſt the tables*, &c.] Though Moſes's anger was hot, and he intended by this action to expreſs his abhorrence of Iſrael's crime: yet his breaking of the tables of the covenant was no raſh ſally of paſſion; but a ſignificant action, done probably by a divine ſuggeſtion, to denote that the covenant was now broken, and that they lay expoſed to, and were deſerving of, the ſevereſt vengeance of their offended God.

V. 20. *Drink of it.*] This intimated that the people muſt expect to experience the fatal effects of their ſin, as bringing a curſe upon all their comforts.

V. 22—24.] Never did a wiſe man make a more unmeaning and fooliſh excuſe, than this of Aaron. We ſhould never have ſuppoſed "that he could ſpeak well," were we to judge of his eloquence by this ſpecimen; for a child might have ſpoken better! If the people were bent upon miſchief, Aaron, the ſaint and ſervant of the Lord, who was entruſted with authority over Iſrael, ſhould have ventured and ſuffered all extremities, in oppoſing their mad deſign: but whilſt he was as pliant as they could wiſh, and very active in the buſineſs, he would charge all the blame on others, and ſpake as if the golden calf had been produced almoſt by accident, without his concurrence, and beyond his expectation, and ſeemed only intent to deprecate the anger of Moſes, not that of the Lord.—No wonder that the Lord was angry with him alſo to have deſtroyed him; but Moſes prayed for him too, (*Deut.* ix 20;) and we may be ſure that he was deeply humbled, and greatly aſhamed of his conduct ever after.

25 And when Moſes ſaw that the people *were* naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* ſhame, amongſt their enemies;)

26 Then Moſes ſtood in the gate of the camp, and ſaid, Who *is* on the LORD's ſide? *let him come* unto me. And all the ſons of Levi gathered themſelves together unto him.

27 And he ſaid unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Put every man his ſword by his ſide, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and ſlay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moſes: and there fell of the people that day about three thouſand men.

29 For Moſes had ſaid, Conſecrate yourſelves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his ſon, and upon his brother; that he may beſtow upon you a bleſſing this day.

30 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Moſes ſaid unto the people, Ye have ſinned a great ſin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I ſhall make an atonement for your ſin.

31 And Moſes returned unto the LORD, and ſaid, Oh, this people have ſinned a great ſin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their ſin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou haſt written.

33 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Whoſoever hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my book.

34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have ſpoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel ſhall go before thee: Nevertheleſs, in the day when I viſit, I will viſit their ſin upon them.

35 And the LORD plagued the people, becauſe they made the calf, which Aaron made.

CHAP.

V. 25. *The people*, &c.] The ſin of the people had deſpoiled them of all claim to the Lord's protection from their enemies, and had left them expoſed without excuſe to his righteous vengeance, (*Gen.* iii. 7—11). They had ſtripped themſelves of part of their ornaments to make the golden calf; and they were ordered to lay aſide the reſt in a way of humiliation; which being on ſo ſhameful an occaſion may be alſo alluded to, (xxxiii. 5, 6.)

V. 27—29.] The Levites were commiſſioned to ſlay the ring-leaders in this wickedneſs, without reſpect of friendſhip, relation, or any other other ſocial tie; for idolatry was a crime to be puniſhed by their magiſtrates. Yet it ſeems none were executed, but thoſe who openly and boldly ſtood forth; whilſt thoſe who retired as aſhamed were ſpared. This commiſſion being faithfully executed brought a great bleſſing upon the tribe. (*Deut.* xxxiii. 9.) For it thus appeared, that it had been peculiarly exempt from the guilt of this national crime, and was valiant for God and his honour: and as the perſons employed were ſeconded by the divine power, which confounded and intimidated the tranſgreſſors, no oppoſition was made to the execution.

V. 32. *Blot me out*, &c.] Moſes in ſtrong affection for the people employed a very vehement expreſſion, ſimilar to that which St. Paul afterwards uſed upon a like occaſion;—the import of which hath much been diſputed, (*Rom.* ix. 3). We cannot ſuppoſe that Moſes declared his willingneſs finally to periſh for the people's ſake; for this would in one ſenſe exceed, and in another ſenſe be contrary to, the rule of duty, as we are required to love our neighbour *as ourſelves*, and not more than ourſelves.—But in this he was a type of Chriſt, and having that mind in him which was in Chriſt, he ſeems to have been willing to have laid down his life in the moſt painful manner, if by that he might preſerve his people from deſtruction.—This may be the meaning of the expreſſion, "Blot me out of thy book," which is an alluſion to the affairs of men, that we ſhall hereafter frequently meet with in different ſenſes, (*Ezek.* xiii. 9.) Probably, when Moſes ſaid "Peradventure I ſhall make an atonement for your ſin," he had reference to his intention of making this propoſal for reconciliation: however, he was ſo far from acceding to the propoſal of their being deſtroyed, and himſelf becoming a great people, that he had rather die for them, or even with them, than ſurvive them. When he was afterwards excluded from Canaan, as if in remembrance of this requeſt, he was blotted out of the Lord's book, which he had written of the heirs of that promiſed land.

V. 34, 35.] Thus the breach was in ſome meaſure made up. The Lord engaged that he would not immediately deſtroy the people; but declared that he would lay up this tranſgreſſion in ſtore againſt them, and remember it, when he ſhould afterwards viſit them for other ſins; and in the mean time he plagued them with his judgments. Moſes was not, however, ſatisfied about the angel that was to go before them, till he knew who that angel was: (xxii. 12:) nor ſhould it paſs unnoticed, that, though Aaron exculpated himſelf, yet the Lord deemed him a principal in the crime, (25,) though the people alſo were guilty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is not in general adviſable for magiſtrates, miniſters, or heads of families to be long abſent from their reſpective

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord commanding Moſes to lead the people to Canaan, and promiſing to ſend an angel before them to put them in poſſeſſion; and their ſorrow and humiliation for their ſin, v. 1—16. 2d. Moſes removing the tabernacle to a diſtance from the camp, the Lord there manifeſting his preſence, and communing with Moſes, in the ſight of the people; and their worſhip, v. 7—11. 3d. Moſes obtaining by earneſt ſupplication a promiſe of the Lord's preſence with the people, and of his ſhewing him his glory, v. 12—23.

AND the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Depart, *and* go up hence, thou and the people which thou haſt brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I ſware unto Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob, ſaying, Unto thy ſeed will I give it:

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tive charges; and if they have no good reaſon to give for ſuch abſence, they will in great meaſure be anſwerable for all the conſequences. They who are ſo ſoon weary of waiting upon God, as to be eager to return to their worldly intereſts and pleaſures, have evidently profited very little by all former inſtructions. And as the people ruſhed into wickedneſs, becauſe they expected not the return of Moſes; ſo unbelief reſpecting Chriſt's future coming to judge the world lies at the root of the ungodlineſs of multitudes: (2 *Peter*, iii. 4. *Matt.* xxiv. 48—50.) High affections, urgent terrors, confident profeſſions, and tranſient comforts, are not ſufficient evidences of true grace; for they frequently go off, and leave the heart more hard, and the conſcience more callous than before: nor can any external means, mercies, or judgments, change the heart, or, for any long time win or awe men even into exterior good behaviour.—The ſervants of God ſhould not expect much gratitude or reſpect from thoſe who are ungrateful to their Lord, rebellious againſt him, and deſpiſers of him: and after being favoured with much ſweet fellowſhip with him, they muſt return to witneſs, to mourn over, and to bear teſtimony againſt the wickedneſs which prevails on earth.—No unhumbled carnal heart can long endure the humbling truths, the holy precepts, and the ſpiritual worſhip of God: and as ſuch perſons inwardly hate his perfect character, ſo they muſt diſlike his image in his faithful people.—But a god, a prieſt, a worſhip, a doctrine, and a ſacrifice ſuited to their carnal mind, will ever meet with abundance of devotees: nay, the very Goſpel itſelf may be ſo *ſophiſticated*, as to ſuit their taſte; its hearers having offered their ſacrifice, "will ſit down "to eat and drink, and riſe up to play;" and whilſt they can render religion, and the ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs, ſelf-gratification, and diſſipation conſiſtent, by *their* views of the Goſpel, they will cry them up as loudly and zealouſly, as Iſrael did the golden calf, and call the whole "a feaſt unto the Lord." Yea, their example, influence, perſuaſion, and diſcourſes will draw in ſome ill-judging compliant Aarons to ſanction, and give credit to this motley religion; though the whole be as contrary to the true Goſpel of Chriſt, as the works of the fleſh are contrary to the fruits of the Spirit. (*Gal.* v. 16—24.) We have the more need to be upon our guard againſt ſuch deluſions, when we conſider how deceitful, and how deſperately wicked, the human heart is; and how eaſily Satan can blind the underſtanding, pervert the judgment, and miſlead the conſcience of the beſt of men, if they are left to themſelves. Soon do we, when in this caſe, forget the terrors of mount Sinai, and the more affecting ſcenes which Gethſemane and Golgotha exhibit, yea, all our ſweet experience of the love of Chriſt: whilſt ſome golden or gilded idol uſurps his throne and his worſhip; and we are eaſily induced to diſgrace his Goſpel, and gratify his enemies.—Well is it for us, that the Prophet like unto Moſes, but infinitely more powerful and merciful, once veiled his majeſty, made atonement for our ſouls, and intereſted the glory of the Father in our ſalvation; and now effectually intercedes in our behalf: elſe we ſhould in a moment be conſumed by his hot diſpleaſure.—Let us rejoice in his interceſſion, and grace: and as the law is now written in the hearts of the true Iſrael of God, who are diſpoſed to love and obey its precepts, and deeply to repent whenever they break them; let us enquire whether we have this good evidence of our ſins being pardoned, and that the everlaſting covenant is ratified with us: for otherwiſe ſin hath made us naked to our ſhame, hath left us without protection in the hands of our enemies, yea expoſed us to the wrath of God himſelf: and however ſinners may *now* rejoice in iniquity, when Chriſt returns to judgment, the ſtouteſt heart will fail, and their mirth will then be turned into weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.—Then every vain excuſe will be ſilenced, every one's ſin will find him out; conſent in wickedneſs will iſſue in mutual recriminations; and the tempters and tempted will be involved in one common, though not equal, condemnation.—Let us now therefore caſt ourſelves humbly upon the divine mercy, thankfully accept of the chaſtiſement of our ſins, and ſeek with all earneſtneſs deliverance from the wrath to come; and as a pledge of it, deliverance from the power and love of ſin in this world.—Of all the crimes which we have committed, none are ſo injurious to man, as thoſe which tempt or encourage others to ſin: and if we would ſhew ourſelves decidedly on the Lord's part in this rebellious world, we muſt not flinch from any ſervice, however difficult, dangerous, or contrary to our natural feelings: nor muſt we in that caſe know any man according to the fleſh. Yet have we cauſe for thankfulneſs, that our teſtimony againſt ſin, and our ſervice for God, are not now of that bloody nature, which were frequently required in former ages.—But though God's judgments are now more ſpiritual, let preſumptuous ſinners remember that they will at length be on that very account the more dreadful.—Our abhorrence of, and indignation againſt, ſin are never too ſtrong, if we are able, in the midſt

of

2 And I will ſend an Angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebuſite:

3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midſt of thee, for thou *art* a ſtiff-necked people: leſt I conſume thee in the way.

4 And when the people heard theſe evil tidings they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

5 For the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Say unto the children of Iſrael, Ye *are* a ſtiff-necked people: I will come up into the midſt of thee in a moment, and conſume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

6 And the children of Iſrael ſtript themſelves of their ornaments, by the mount Horeb.

7 And Moſes took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to paſs, *that* every one which ſought the LORD, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation which *was* without the camp.

8 And

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of our hot diſpleaſure, to pray earneſtly for ſinners, and labour diſintereſtedly to do them good: and if the glory of God may be pleaded with him as a good argument, why he ſhould not deſtroy his people; may it not be pleaded with them as a cogent argument, why they ſhould not ſin againſt him, and cauſe his holy name and religion to be blaſphemed?—God will ſurely honour thoſe, who are preſerved free from, and boldly proteſt againſt, prevailing ſins; and retirement and communion with God are happy means of keeping us out of the way of temptation.—But if we have been thus preſerved we muſt give God the glory; and become ſupplicants in behalf of others; for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth ſometimes to the ſaving of a nation. But alas! the moſt zealous may often be aſhamed, when they compare the aſſiduity, liberality, and earneſtneſs of theſe idolatrous worſhippers, and of the idolatrous devotees of worldly intereſts, pleaſures, and preferments, with their own ſupineneſs, luke warmneſs, and want of generoſity in the ſervice of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 1. *Depart*, &c.] Moſes had pleaded the Lord's promiſe and oath to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and intereſted his glory in the preſervation of Iſrael, and in putting them in poſſeſſion of Canaan: the Lord therefore commanded him to lead them directly thither, without any further mention of erecting the tabernacle, or eſtabliſhing the worſhip of God among them. As if he had ſaid, 'Let them have the land flowing with 'milk and honey; and an angel ſhall go before them, 'and put them in poſſeſſion of it: but let them have it 'without any bleſſing, without oracles, covenant, or ordi-'nances, to diſtinguiſh them from the idolatrous nations 'around them.'—It is obſervable that, when Moſes had ſeen their wickedneſs, he did not call them the Lord's people; but ſaid, "Oh, this people," for he could not but acknowledge that their idolatry was an entire infraction of the covenant, and that God might juſtly diſown thoſe who had ſo ſhamefully diſowned him. And in like manner the Lord calls them, "the people, whom thou haſt brought out of Egypt," as though he diſdained to have any more to do with them: but Moſes, having thus far prevailed by importunity, was encouraged ſtill further to urge his ſuit.

V. 3. *For I will not*, &c.] Such declarations rather expreſs what God juſtly might do, what it would become him to do, and what he would do were it not for ſome intervening conſideration, than his *irreverſible* purpoſe; and always imply a reſerved exception, in caſe the party offending were truly penitent: of this we ſhould find many inſtances, (*Ez.* iii. 4. 18—21 *Jonah.* iii. iv.) The Lord intimated, that he would not erect his tabernacle, or eſtabliſh his worſhip among them, for that would only increaſe their guilt, and provoke his jealouſy to their deſtruction: nor would he afford them the ſenſible tokens of his preſence, which they were diſpoſed to treat with ſuch inſufferable contempt.

V. 4—6.] The people had parted with ſome of their ornaments to make the golden calf: and being required to mourn for that wickedneſs; they were proved, whether they would as readily at God's command lay aſide the reſt. As they complied without heſitation, and ſeemed more grieved becauſe the Lord refuſed to go with them, than on account of the terrible execution recorded in the foregoing chapter, we are led to hope that ſeveral of them were truly humbled; the others, by an external humiliation, gave glory to God, which was a motive with him to avert the national judgment, (1 *Kings* xxii. 27—29.)

V. 7. *Took*, &c.] This tabernacle ſeems to have been a temporary building, erected for the ſolemn worſhip of the people, and as the ſymbol of the divine preſence, until that preſcribed in the mount was prepared; above which, perhaps, the pillar of fire and cloud reſted, where Moſes had hitherto enquired of the Lord, and at which he had adminiſtered juſtice to the people. The removal of this to a diſtance from the camp was another evidence of the Lord's heavy diſpleaſure, in that he refuſed any longer to dwell among them. It was the tabernacle of the congregation, where the "*congregation of the Lord*" aſſembled to worſhip; but the bulk of the nation were no longer worthy of that title: and if any individuals were deſirous of ſeeking, and humbling themſelves before the Lord; they were required to ſhew their abhorrence of Iſrael's idolatry, by ſeparating from among

8 And it came to pass when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD talked with Moses.

10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent-door.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people.

14 And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *Is it* not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And

among them, and following the tabernacle out of the camp.

V. 8—10.] Whilst the people were in expectation of the event, this signal discovery before their eyes of the Lord's favour to Moses, by leaving them, and meeting him at a distance from the camp, fully ratified all that he had done; and wrought such a conviction upon their consciences, as produced this general worship of the Lord, towards the symbol of his presence.

V. 11. *Face to face*, &c.] That is, in the most familiar manner, and with an audible voice. There does not seem sufficient ground to conclude, that there was any visible *human* appearance: the voice probably came out of the cloud, as in Christ's transfiguration.

V. 12. *And thou*, &c.] Moses feared, lest the people should be left under the conduct of a created angel the minister of God's providence; without his gracious presence as an object of accepted worship: as one therefore whom the Lord knew by name, (*i. e.* had specially chosen, and delegated to this service) he prayed to know who this angel was. (xxiii. 20, 21.)

V. 13. *Shew me now thy way*, &c.] Being "known of "the Lord," Moses desired to know more of the Lord, (*Gal.* iv. 9,) and to have increasing evidences of his grace; and therefore he prayed to be under his immediate guidance and instruction. He would also put the Lord in remembrance, that Israel was the only people upon earth, that professed themselves to be his worshippers. He especially deprecated the Lord's departure from them; and pleaded with him that he would, notwithstanding this breach, continue his presence, and establish his worship among them.

V. 14—17.] Thus in answer to Moses' intercession, and for his sake (who was in this a remarkable type of Christ,) the Lord consented to accompany the people, the breach was made up, and matters reverted to their old channel: accordingly in the following chapters we have an account of the tabernacle being erected, and those ordinances appointed, by which Israel was distinguished and separated from other nations. And though Moses never entered the rest of Canaan, he found rest to his soul in the Lord's ways, and in the comfort of his presence; and an entrance into the rest, which remaineth for the people of God.

V. 18. *I beseech thee*, &c.] Moses intreated a fuller discovery of the Lord's glory as a pledge of his special favour, and of the accomplishment of the promise which he had just given him.

V. 19. *All my goodness*, &c.] The goodness of God, in its manifold and unfathomable exercises towards sinners, and in its harmony with his justice and holiness through Jesus Christ, forms the grand display of his glory, and that which in this life we are most capable of beholding. How this was manifested to Moses will be seen in the ensuing chapter.

And will be gracious, &c.] As if the Lord had said,

30 And he ſaid, Thou canſt not ſee my face: for there ſhall no man ſee me, and live.

21 And the LORD ſaid, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou ſhalt ſtand upon a rock.

22 And it ſhall come to paſs, while my glory paſſeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I paſs by.

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou ſhalt ſee my back-parts: but my face ſhall not be ſeen.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes commanded to hew two tables of ſtone, and with them to re-aſcend mount Sinai alone: and his obedience, v. 1—4. 2d. The Lord proclaiming his name, and Moſes worſhipping, v. 5—9. 3d. The Lord renewing his covenant with Iſrael, giving promiſes to them, and enacting laws for them, v. 10—27. 4th. Moſes, after forty days faſting, returning with the tables of the law in his hand, and with his face ſhining; which he covered before the people with a vail, v. 28—35.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Hew thee two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt: and I will write upon *theſe* tables the words that were in the firſt tables which thou brakeſt.

2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and preſent thyſelf there to me, in the top of the mount.

3 And

'I will pardon what ſinners I pleaſe; nor ſhall any de-'gree of guilt bar this ſovereign exerciſe of my mercy,' Thus, whilſt ſome, whoſe crimes appear of inferior malignity, are left to hardneſs of heart, and ſuffer the *deſerved puniſhment of their evil deeds*; in other inſtances, "where ſin "has abounded, grace much more abounds." (*Rom.* ix. 15—18.)

V. 20—23.] The full diſplay of the divine glory would overwhelm the feeble frame of mortal ſinful man: that condeſcending diſplay of it in mild luſtre, which is made in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, is the only one that is tolerable to us: as the ſun, ſeen through a miſt, having his brightneſs ſoftened becomes more diſtinctly viſible to the human eye. This ſeems to be here repreſented. The rock, on which Moſes was to ſtand, and in the clift of which he was to be hid, might be the ſame rock from which the waters flowed; and we may ſafely ſay of it, "that rock was Chriſt." From thence he was to be favoured with ſuch a view, as he was able to bear. The Lord's face, the direct diſplay of his eſſential glory, he could not ſee and live; as this is reſerved for the beatific viſion: but his back parts he ſhould behold, that is, ſuch diſcoveries are made of his glory in his works, eſpecially in the work of redemption. Whether any external appearance attended this diſplay, or what it was, I cannot determine.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Outward proſperity is often conferred by an *angry* God, which men take as their portion, and look no further.—Though multitudes of profeſſing Iſraelites periſh in their apoſtacy; yet God can ſecure the honour of his faithfulneſs and love.—Whilſt the conſcience remains tender, the removal of God's ordinances, and being left to proſperous ungodlineſs, will be dreaded as the moſt heavy judgments.—Every commandment of God to ſinners implies ſome encouragement: and when he calls to weeping, and mourning, thoſe enjoyments and ornaments, which at another time are allowable, will be neglected by the broken-hearted penitent: and indeed it would be ſhameful for idolaters freely to give up their adornings for the ſake of their idols; and for Chriſtians to refuſe to part with their's, when decency, modeſty, charity, and perhaps juſtice, require it. When the Lord appears about to leave a degenerate church or people, we muſt be decided in proteſting againſt prevailing iniquities, in withdrawing from obſtinate offenders, and in following the word and ordinances of God whitherſoever they go, and let who will ſtay behind: and when young perſons love not only to go to, but abide in, the tabernacle of the Lord, it promiſes an uſeful and honourable old age. (*Pſalm* xcii. 12—14.) God will ſhew ſuch tokens of his favour to his approved ſervants, as ſhall be evident to all their oppoſers; and in communion with himſelf will make them rich amends for all their troubles.—Whatever intereſt we have at a throne of grace it ſhould be improved in behalf of others; remembering that the Lord delights in and honours importunity: and we ſhould take encouragement from our ſucceſs in prayer, to requeſt ſtill more and more. If we have any uſeful knowledge of God, it ſprings from our having been firſt noticed by him with diſtinguiſhing regard: and it will lead us to deſire to know more of him, of his ways, and of his ſpecial grace, day by day. We ſhall therefore in every undertaking, and in all our removals, urgently deſire to be under his guidance; earneſtly pray, "that unleſs his preſence go with us, he "will not carry us up thence:" and be careful that covetouſneſs or conveniency do not draw us from our proper place, or to a diſtance from his ordinances. Nor ſhall we forget, that as the Lord's people are diſtinguiſhed, and ſeparated by peculiar privileges from others; ſo they are called to ſeparate themſelves, that they may "be unto him a peculiar "people zealous of good works;" which is both the effect of divine teaching, the evidence of divine Grace, the preſent reſt of the ſoul, and the earneſt of everlaſting reſt.—They, who have been favoured with a glimpſe of the Lord's

3 And no man ſhall come up with thee, neither let any man be ſeen throughout all the mount: neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

4 And he hewed two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt; and Moſes roſe up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of ſtone.

5 And the LORD deſcended in the cloud, and ſtood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; viſiting the iniquity

Lord's glory and a taſte of his goodneſs, will be athirſt for more full diſcoveries and communications: and as here "they ſee through a glaſs darkly," they will by that thirſt be rendered willing to depart hence, that they may "ſee him face to face." In the mean time they will thankfully, as ſheltered in the rock of ſalvation from the conſuming fire of his holineſs and juſtice, contemplate his footſteps, and the diſcoveries made of his glorious perfections, in all his works, but eſpecially in the work of redemption: and theſe views are peculiarly ſuited to humble them; to wean them from the world, and eclipſe all its vain ſplendour; and gradually to transform them into the image of him whom they thus contemplate by faith, and through the teaching of his holy Spirit. If then he cauſes all his goodneſs to paſs before us, and make us acquainted with his NAME, as a God of grace and mercy; whilſt we acknowledge our obligations to our heavenly Advocate, who by his prevailing interceſſion hath completely repaired the breach which ſin had made; we may well be willing to wait for further diſcoveries, till we depart hence to be with him. And finally, let not ſinners forget, that "he, who is gracious, to whom he will be "gracious, and has mercy, on whom he will have mercy," hath alſo aſſured us, that "him, who cometh unto him, "he will in no wiſe caſt out."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *Hew thee*, &c.] Moſes having prevailed by his interceſſion, the Lord gave orders for renewing the covenant, and for delivering to the people the moral law upon tables of ſtone: but to remind them of the ſin, through which the former tables had been broken, the Lord would not prepare theſe himſelf, but Moſes was ordered to hew them fit for the writing; which it ſeems was not a work of much labour or exactneſs, for it was ſpeedily performed. When God made man in his own image, the moral law was written in his heart without any external created concurrence: but ſince the covenant then made with him was broken, the miniſtry of men hath been uſed both in writing the law in the Scriptures, and in our hearts: and conviction of ſin, which is by the law, as the miniſtration of condemnation, forms a neceſſary preparation to faith in Chriſt and holy obedience. But though men are inſtrumental in this work, the whole writing is the Lord's: He alone can teach us to love and delight in obeying his holy law.

V. 3. *No man*, &c.] The people were tried forty days more, whether they would wait for Moſes' return, though they knew what was become of him: and the method uſed would tend alſo to impreſs them with an aweful ſenſe of the divine purity, their own unworthineſs, and the Lord's eſpecial regard for Moſes.

V. 6. *And proclaimed*, &c.] According to the promiſe made in the preceding chapter, the Lord met Moſes in a cloud, and thence proclaimed his NAME; that is, thoſe perfections, and that character, which are denoted by the name JEHOVAH. This was proclaimed in an audible voice, that Moſes, and by him Iſrael and all the earth, might know the God with whom they have to do; not only that there is a God, but what his moral perfections are; conſequently what he muſt require of them, and what they may expect from him. When the Lord made himſelf known to Moſes by the name, I AM, THAT I AM, he declared unto him, (as in this paſſage by the words, The LORD, the LORD GOD) his ſelf-exiſtence, unchangeableneſs, eternity, omnipotence, omniſcience, omnipreſence, with his authority, as everlaſting, abſolute, and univerſal ſovereign, lawgiver, and judge; who being the creator, upholder, and preſerver of, and provider for, the whole world, demands all love, worſhip, and obedience from all his rational creatures. But here the Lord eſpecially made known his *moral* perfections. In this proclamation of his name, he firſt, in a variety of expreſſions, declared his mercy and grace; with which ſinners in general are, and the Iſraelites in particular were, moſt concerned to be acquainted; that they may both be certified there is hope for them, and know from whence that hope ariſes. "The LORD "GOD is *merciful* and *gracious*," that is, condeſcending, compaſſionate, ready to forgive the ſinner, to relieve the indigent, and to reſcue the miſerable: he is *long-ſuffering*; that is, ſlow to anger, patiently bearing the multiplied provocations of his rebellious creatures, affording them ſpace for repentance, and not delighting in their miſery; but only puniſhing when the honour of his name and of his law, and the welfare of his univerſal and everlaſting kingdom require it. "He is *abundant in goodneſs and truth*;" that is, the riches of his liberality and bounty are infinite, the whole creation is replete with them, all creatures are ſupplied by them; even ſinners abundantly receive them, though they abuſe and are ungrateful for them: and all he reveals is infallible truth, all he propoſes is abſolute ſincerity, and all that he promiſes is in perfect faithfulneſs; whilſt he hath revealed, propoſed, and promiſed, even to us ſinners, ſuch abundant goodneſs, as can neither be expreſſed nor conceived.

V. 7. *Keeping mercy*, &c.] That is continually ſhewing mercy, in all its various exerciſes, to thouſands of ſinners

iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

8 And Moſes made haſte, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worſhipped.

9 And he ſaid, If now I have found grace in thy ſight, O LORD, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongſt us, (for it *is* a ſtiff-necked people:) and pardon our iniquity and our ſin, and take us for thine inheritance.

10 And he ſaid, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, ſuch as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people amongſt which thou *art*, ſhall ſee the work of the LORD: for it *is* a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

11 Obſerve thou that which I command thee this day: Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebuſite.

12 Take heed to thyſelf, leſt thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, whither thou goeſt, leſt it be for a ſnare in the midſt of thee.

13 But ye ſhall deſtroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.

14 For thou ſhalt worſhip no other god: for the LORD, whoſe name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

15 Leſt thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do ſacrifice unto their gods, and *one* call thee, and thou eat of his ſacrifice,

16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy ſons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy ſons go a whoring after their gods.

17 Thou ſhalt make thee no molten gods.

18 The feaſt of unleavened bread ſhalt thou keep: Seven days ſhalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou cameſt out from Egypt.

19 All that openeth the matrix *is* mine: and

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ners, and having inexhauſtible treaſures for thouſands more; yea for increaſing numbers till the end of time: doing all good to thoſe who truſt in his mercy at preſent, and reſerving good for them in future, yea to everlaſting: and not for them only, but for their children's children; "for his mercy endureth for ever."—"*Forgiving iniquity*, "*and tranſgreſſion and Sin*;" for all his mercy and goodneſs either make way for, conſiſt in, or reſult from the full, free, and everlaſting forgiveneſs of every kind and degree of ſin, which can be ſpecified.—"*And that will by no* "*means clear the guilty*:" For all this mercy and grace conſiſt with the moſt entire hatred of all moral evil, and the moſt abſolute determination to puniſh it: yea the holineſs and juſtice of God are a part of his goodneſs and love, conſidered in their excerciſe towards all his rational creatures, throughout univerſal ſpace and everlaſting duration. Mercy and forgiveneſs are never exerciſed by our holy and righteous God, but through the atonement of the death of Chriſt, and to thoſe who believe in his name; in whoſe ſufferings his holineſs and juſtice have their grand diſplay and the evil of ſin is moſt fully manifeſted. None are pardoned but they who repent, condemn themſelves, and forſake the allowed practice of every ſin: for God's forgiving mercy is always attended by his converting ſanctifying grace. Nay even they, for whoſe ſins the blood of Chriſt hath fully atoned, are ſeverely chaſtiſed in this world for thoſe failures, into which, through the remaining ſinfulneſs of the heart and the power of temptation, they are betrayed. But that ſinner, who remains *guilty*, having not in the exerciſe of true repentance and faith transferred his guilt to the great ſacrifice for ſin, ſhall by no means be acquitted or eſcape; nor any that abuſe, neglect, or deſpiſe ſuch great ſalvation, in impenitence and unbelief. The ſevereſt vengeance of God ſhall fall upon the heads of ſuch perſons; the very mercy, which they have abuſed into an encouragement to ſin, ſhall occaſion their deeper condemnation; and if Iſrael, or any other nation, dare to abuſe ſuch a proclamation of the name of a merciful God, national judgments upon them, and upon their poſterity, ſhall vindicate the honour of his inſulted juſtice and holineſs.

V. 8, 9.] This proclamation of the name of God had its proper effect upon Moſes, who immediately bowed down in reverential worſhip, ſeized the encouraging words from the mouth of the Lord, and pleaded the mercy of God, as an argument with him to forgive Iſrael, to continue his guidance, and to take them for his inheritance, "though a ſtiff-necked people." Or, if we preſerve our tranſlation, he makes even that circumſtance an additional reaſon; as they, being a ſtiff-necked people, needed the conduct of ſuch a merciful and gracious God, could no otherwiſe be done any good to, and would afford him an opportunity of glorifying his mercy and grace.

V. 10. *I will do marvels.*] If the people were obedient, theſe marvels would be wrought in their behalf; but if they were diſobedient, for their puniſhment.

V. 11—17.] The covenant made with Iſrael was a marriage covenant, idolatry was conſidered as adultery, and the name of God is JEALOUS; every approach therefore to

and every firſtling among thy cattle, *whether* ox or ſheep, *that is male.*

20 But the firſtling of an aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then ſhalt thou break his neck. All the firſt-born of thy ſons thou ſhalt redeem: and none ſhall appear before me empty.

21 Six days thou ſhalt work, but on the ſeventh day thou ſhalt reſt: in earing-time and in harveſt thou ſhalt reſt.

22 And thou ſhalt obſerve the feaſt of weeks, of the firſt-fruits of wheat-harveſt, and the feaſt of in-gathering at the year's end.

23 Thrice in the year ſhall all your men-children appear before the LORD GOD, the God of Iſrael.

24 For I will caſt out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither ſhall any man deſire thy land, when thou ſhalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God, thrice in the year.

25 Thou ſhalt not offer the blood of my ſacrifice with leaven, neither ſhall the ſacrifice of the feaſt of paſſover be left unto the morning.

26 The firſt of the firſt-fruits of thy land thou ſhalt bring unto the houſe of the LORD thy God. Thou ſhalt not ſeethe a kid in his mother's milk.

27 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Write thou theſe words: for after the tenour of theſe words I have made a covenant with thee and with Iſrael.

28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water: and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 And it came to paſs when Moſes came down from Mount Sinai, (with the two tables of teſtimony in Moſes' hand, when he came down from the mount,) that Moſes wiſt not that the ſkin of his face ſhone, while he talked with him.

30 And when Aaron and all the children of Iſrael ſaw Moſes, behold the ſkin of his face ſhone, and they were afraid to come nigh him.

31 And Moſes called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moſes talked with them.

32 And afterward all the children of Iſrael came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had ſpoken with him in mount Sinai.

33 And *till* Moſes had done ſpeaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

34 But when Moſes went in before the LORD to ſpeak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out and ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, *that* which he was commanded.

35 And the children of Iſrael ſaw the face of Moſes, that the ſkin of Moſes' face ſhone: and

to that ſin, would provoke him to jealouſy. They were commanded therefore to deſtroy every monument of idolatry, though curious and coſtly; to reject all treaties of alliance, friendſhip, or marriage, however advantageous, with idolaters; and to refuſe all invitations to idolatrous feaſts: and they were eſpecially reminded not to repeat their old crime of making a graven image of God.

V. 24. *Neither ſhall any man*, &c.] This remarkable promiſe would form, whilſt the people continued to obſerve their ſolemn feaſts, a full demonſtration of the divine original of their religion: three times in the year they would put this matter to a new proof. Nor we do we ever hear them complain through their whole hiſtory, that the land was invaded on theſe occaſions. No falſe prophet would have inſerted ſuch an engagement in his writings, by which his own impoſture would always have been liable to detection.

V. 29. *Moſes wiſt*, &c.] As the light of the ſun cauſes even opaque bodies, on which it ſhines, to appear luminous; thus long contemplation of the divine glory cauſed an irradiation of the ſoul of Moſes, which was repreſented to the people by this external brightneſs of his countenance: but he himſelf was not conſcious of it; for true holineſs is always *clothed* with humility.

V. 35. *Moſes put the vail*, &c.] This vail marked the obſcurity of this diſpenſation, compared with that of the New Teſtament: it was alſo an emblem of that natural vail, which pride and carnal mindedneſs have put upon the hearts of men reſpecting ſpiritual things; and it repreſented the vail, that was and is upon the minds of ſuch multitudes of the nation of Iſrael, reſpecting the true meaning of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament; which can only be taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, ſhewing to them "Chriſt as the end of the law for righ-"teouſneſs to every one that believeth." (2 *Cor.* iii. 13—16. *Rom.* x. 4.) The conduct of Moſes ſhews us that eminent perſons ſhould avoid oſtentation, and rather conceal, than boaſt of their peculiar attainments and

and Moſes put the vail upon his face again until he went in to ſpeak with him.

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes reporting to the people the divine directions concerning the ſabbath, their voluntary offering, and the tabernacle with it's furniture, v. 1—19. 2d. The people's liberal contributions, and aſſiſtance, v. 20—29. 3d. Bezaleel and Aholiab appointed to, and qualified for, their work, v. 30—35.

AND Moſes gathered all the congregation of the children of Iſrael together, and ſaid unto them, Theſe *are* the words which the LORD hath commanded that ye ſhould do them.

2 Six days ſhall work be done, but on the ſeventh day there ſhall be to you an holy-day, a ſabbath of reſt to the LORD: whoſoever doeth work therein, ſhall be put to death.

endowments. They ſhould accommodate themſelves to the capacities of their weaker brethren, and thus endeavour to abate envy by condeſcenſion; and to be content with that honour which cometh from God only. But before God every vail is laid aſide; and we appear in his preſence juſt as we are, whether better or worſe than our fellow creatures think of us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The giving of the law to ſinful man, though ſalvation be not by it, is an indication that the Lord has purpoſes of mercy to him; and the writing of it in our hearts is the only ſure evidence, that our ſins are forgiven, that God hath taken us into covenant with himſelf, and that we are become his people: ſo that he, who can *truly* ſay, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," notwithſtanding the infirmities, conflicts, and remaining ſinfulneſs, which cauſe him to groan being burdened, is certainly a true believer; for this hath God wrought, in conſequence and evidence of reconciliation through Jeſus Chriſt. When without delay and implicitly, we obey the Lord's commands, and reſort to thoſe places and ordinances which he hath appointed, he will certainly condeſcend to meet us, and fulfil his kindeſt promiſes. But the NAME of the Lord proclaimed unto Moſes, as a juſt God and a Saviour, can alone give relief to a burdened conſcience, or encourage the prayers of an humbled ſinner. Let no enquiring ſoul overlook this name of the Lord: much of the great myſtery of godlineſs is involved in it, or connected with it. Let no diſcouraged ſinner deſpond with ſuch words of grace and truth ſounding in his ears: yet let none abuſe ſuch mercy; for God knows how to puniſh as well as pardon; to puniſh conſiſtently with the glory of his mercy, as well as to pardon conſiſtently with his juſtice and holineſs; as thoſe guilty wretches will one day know, who "ſin on that grace may abound." A true diſcovery of the Lord's glory will unite filial confidence with profound reverence, and put life and vigour into fervent prayers and ſupplications; and every perfection of the name of God will furniſh an argument, in the mouth of an experienced believer, which he may plead with him, for the forgiveneſs of his ſins, the ſanctification of his heart, or the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom.—Whilſt we liſten to the promiſes of God's word we muſt obſerve alſo to do his commandments; elſe every external advantage will only ſerve to increaſe our condemnation: and in ſeeking aſſurance that the Lord hath made with us an everlaſting covenant of peace, we muſt break every convenant with ſin, renounce all needleſs connection with ſinners, ſhun every ſnare and temptation, avoid all appearance of evil, and not ſpare or covet any object which tends to it: for our God is *jealous*, and will endure no rival in our affections. Nor is any thing more enſnaring to ſouls, or more deſtructive to religion, than the marriages of God's people with thoſe of no religion, or of a falſe religion.—Such is our forgetfulneſs in the concerns of our ſouls, that we need not only to have the ſame things repeated in our ears, but to have them committed to writing, that we may have them ever before our eyes. (2 *Pet.* i. 12—15.)—Whilſt we devote ourſelves to the Lord's ſervice, and attend with delight on his worſhip, we may entruſt ourſelves and our poſſeſſions to his keeping, with confidence that none can do us any real hurt: and when a part of our time, and ſubſtance are conſecrated to him, we ſhall ſecure a ſanctified and comfortable enjoyment of the remainder. Who would not willingly forego all ſenſual pleaſures, to enjoy with Moſes the ſacred pleaſure of the holy mount? But though it is good to be there: yet alas! how backward are we to enter upon, and how apt to grow weary of, this ſweet employment! In heaven it ſhall be otherwiſe: no leiſure for, no thought of, no deſire after, ſuch things, as here occupy our time, and engroſs our hearts!—The more we now ſet our affections on things above, ſeek communion with the Lord, and enjoy the contemplation of his glory in the Goſpel by faith and ſerious meditation; the more ſhall we be "changed into his image from glory to glory by "the Spirit of the Lord:" (2 *Cor.* iii. 18;) and when we come forth from our devotion, we ſhall ſhine in our holy converſation before men, and ſhew by our good works that we have been with God in the mount. But it is well when others behold it, and glorify God on our behalf; and we are not ourſelves conſcious of it, being "clothed with humility." Indeed, whilſt we are in this world we muſt accommodate ourſelves to our ſituation, and to what thoſe around us are able to bear; and not only muſt humbly avoid oſtentation, in reſpect of our religious experiences, and the eſpecial favours which the Lord hath vouchſafed us; but muſt prudently avoid ſpeaking of them, leſt we throw our pearls before ſwine, which "may trample them under foot, and turn again and rent "us:" and be content to rejoice in them, and be thankful before God in ſecret; for it is "a joy, which a ſtranger "intermeddleth not with."

3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day.

4 And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, saying,

5 Take ye from amongst you an offering unto the LORD: Whosoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,

6 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*,

7 And rams' skins died red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood,

8 And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense,

9 And onyx-stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breast-plate.

10 And every wise-hearted among you, shall come and make all that the LORD hath commanded;

11 The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars and his sockets,

12 The ark and the staves thereof, *with* the mercy-seat, and the vail of the covering,

13 The table and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shew-bread,

14 The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light,

15 And the incense-altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle,

16 The altar of burnt-offering with his brazen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,

17 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court,

18 The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords,

19 The clothes of service, to do service in the holy *place*, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to minister in the priests' office.

20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses.

21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.

22 And they came both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, *and* brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, *offered* an offering of gold unto the LORD.

23 And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought *them*.

24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the LORD's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim-wood for any work of the service, brought *it*.

25 And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, *both* of blue, and of purple, *and* of scarlet, and of fine linen.

26 And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom, spun goats' *hair*,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 3. *Ye shall kindle*, &c.] In those warm climates, this might not be attended which much inconvenience: but though we allow that the *letter* of this belongs to the strictness of the Jewish sabbath; yet the works of necessity, and of mercy, which Christ allows, do not imply a permission to "make provision for the flesh, "to fulfil the lust thereof." Many expositors, however, understand the prohibition to be merely of fires, as used in manufactories of different kinds, or by smiths, plumbers, and others; and not as relating to fires for common needful purposes.

V. 22. *Were willing-hearted*, &c.] Some it seems were not willing to part with their gold and silver, especially that of which their ornaments were made: but they, who were zealous for the worship of Jehovah, would not be outdone by those, who had given their ear-rings to make the golden calf; and were willing to lack their *newly-acquired* adorning, that the sanctuary of God might want no part of its beauty. A rare example!

27 And

27 And the rulers brought onyx-ſtones, and ſtones to be ſet for the ephod, and for the breaſt-plate:

28 And ſpice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the ſweet incenſe.

29 The children of Iſrael brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman whoſe heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made, by the hand of Moſes.

30 And Moſes ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:

31 And he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wiſdom, in underſtanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanſhip;

32 And to deviſe curious works, to work in gold, and in ſilver, and in braſs,

33 And in the cutting of ſtones to ſet *them*, and in carving of wood to make any manner of cunning work.

34 And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, *both* he and Aholiab the ſon of Ahiſamach of the tribe of Dan.

35 Them hath he filled with wiſdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in ſcarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, *even* of them that do any work, and of thoſe that deviſe cunning work.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Bezaleel and Aholiab proceeding to work, and ſtill receiving contributions; till, having more than enough, the people were ſtayed, v. 1—7. 2d. The making of the ſeveral parts of the ſanctuary, v. 8—38. (Notes, &c. xxvi.)

THEN wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whom the LORD put wiſdom and underſtanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.

2 And Moſes called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whoſe heart the LORD had put wiſdom, *even* every one whoſe heart ſtirred him up to come unto the work to do it.

3 And they received of Moſes all the offering which the children of Iſrael had brought, for the work of the ſervice of the ſanctuary, to make it *withal*. And they brought

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V. 30—35.] The ſupernatural qualifications of theſe two perſons proved their divine appointment: yet they had alſo an expreſs nomination to their work. Others who were ſkilful might aſſiſt them, but they were to direct and ſuperintend. Chriſt alone "builds the Temple "of the Lord, and bears the glory." (*Zech.* vi. 12, 13:) but miniſters and private Chriſtians, under his direction and by his grace, may be fellow-workers together with him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is enough to refer to the obſervations, which have been already made upon the typical meaning of thoſe things, which are mentioned in this and the following chapters: as they contain only an hiſtory of the execution of the directions before given to Moſes. But let us obſerve and imitate his faithfulneſs, in every thing entruſted to us; and through him look unto Jeſus, who was "faithful as a Son over his own houſe." (*Heb.* iii. 1—6.) Without a willing mind the moſt coſtly offerings would be abhorred, but with it the meaneſt will meet with a gracious acceptance; and then may our hearts be ſaid to be willing, when we chearfully contribute and aſſiſt, according to our ability, in promoting the cauſe of God and his truth: but as even this willingneſs is the gift and work of God, we ſhould beſeech him daily to increaſe in us a willing mind, to abound unto every good work. Such as in mean employments are diligent and humbly contented, are as acceptable to God, as thoſe who are engaged in more ſplendid ſervices. The women who ſpun the goats' hair *were wiſe-hearted*, as well as the perſons, who preſided over the work of the tabernacle, or as Aaron who burnt incenſe there; becauſe they did it heartily to the Lord: thus the labourer, mechanic, or menial ſervant, who conſcientiouſly attends to the work of his ſituation, in the faith and fear of God, may be as wiſe as the moſt uſeful miniſter; and will certainly meet with the divine acceptance, as well as he. In ſhort, our wiſdom and duty conſiſt in giving God the glory and uſe of our talents, be they more or leſs; neither abuſing nor burying them, but occupying therewith till our Lord come; being ſatisfied that it is better to be a door-keeper in his ſervice, than the moſt mighty and renowned of the ungodly.

brought yet unto him free offerings every morning.

4 And all the wiſe men that wrought all the work of the ſanctuary, came every man from his work which they made.

5 And they ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, The people bring much more than enough for the ſervice of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.

6 And Moſes gave commandment, and they cauſed it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, ſaying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the ſanctuary. So the people were reſtrained from bringing.

7 For the ſtuff they had was ſufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

8 And every wiſe-hearted man, among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle, made ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and ſcarlet; with cherubims of cunning work made he them.

9 The length of one curtain *was* twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains *were* all of one ſize.

10 And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and *the other* five curtains he coupled one unto another.

11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain, from the ſelvedge in the coupling: likewiſe he made in the uttermoſt ſide of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the ſecond.

12 Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which *was* in the coupling of the ſecond: the loops held one *curtain* to another.

13 And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches. So it became one tabernacle.

14 And he made curtains *of* goats' *hair*, for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them.

15 The length of one curtain *was* thirty cubits, and four cubits *was* the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains *were* of one ſize.

16 And he coupled five curtains by themſelves, and ſix curtains by themſelves.

17 And he made fifty loops upon the uttermoſt edge of the curtain in the coupling; and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain, which coupleth the ſecond.

18 And he made fifty taches *of* braſs to couple the tent together, that it might be one.

19 And he made a covering for the tent, *of* rams' ſkins dyed red and a covering *of* badgers' ſkins above *that*.

20 And he made boards for the tabernacle, *of* ſhittim-wood, ſtanding up.

21 The length of a board *was* ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half.

22 One board had two tenons, equally diſtant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

23 And he made boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the ſouth ſide ſouthward.

24 And forty ſockets of ſilver he made under the twenty boards: two ſockets under one board for his two tenons, and two ſockets under another board for his two tenons.

25 And for the other ſide of the tabernacle *which is* toward the north corner, he made twenty boards,

26 And their forty ſockets of ſilver: two ſockets under one board, and two ſockets under another board.

27 And for the ſides of the tabernacle weſtward, he made ſix boards.

28 And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two ſides.

29 And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners.

30 And there were eight boards, and their ſockets *were* ſixteen ſockets of ſilver, under every board two ſockets.

31 And he made bars *of* ſhittim-wood: five for the boards of the one ſide of the tabernacle,

32 And five bars for the boards of the other ſide of the tabernacle, and five bars for

the boards of the tabernacle for the ſides weſtward.

33 And he made the middle bar to ſhoot through the boards from the one end to the other.

34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings *of* gold *to be* places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 And he made a vail *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen: *with* cherubims made he it of cunning work.

36 And he made thereunto four pillars of ſhittim-*wood*, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks *were of* gold, and he caſt for them four ſockets of ſilver.

37 And he made an hanging for the tabernacle-door, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, of needle-work,

38 And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters and their fillets with gold: but their five ſockets *were of* braſs.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Contains the making, 1ſt. Of the furniture for the ſanctuary, v. 1—28. 2d. Of the anointing oil, and incenſe, v. 29. (Notes, &c. XXV. XXX. 1—10. 22—38.)

AND Bezaleel made the ark *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits and a half *was* the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it.

2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

3 And he caſt for it four rings of gold, *to be ſet* by the four corners of it: even two rings upon the one ſide of it, and two rings upon the other ſide of it.

4 And he made ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold.

5 And he put the ſtaves into the rings, by the ſides of the ark, to bear the ark.

6 And he made the mercy-ſeat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *was* the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

7 And he made two cherubims *of* gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-ſeat.

8 One cherub on the end on this ſide, and another cherub on the *other* end on that ſide: out of the mercy-ſeat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

9 And the cherubims ſpread out *their* wings on high, *and* covered with their wings over the mercy-ſeat, with their faces one to another; *even* to the mercy-ſeat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.

10 And he made the table *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits *was* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

11 And he overlaid it with pure gold,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXVI.] The promptitude and alacrity with which theſe builders ſet about their work, the exactneſs with which they performed it, and the diſintereſted fidelity with which they objected to the people's bringing any more contributions, are well worthy of our imitation. Thus ſhould we ſerve God, yea, and our earthly ſuperiors too for his ſake in all things lawful; and thus ſhould all who are employed in public truſts abhor filthy lucre, be ſuperior to covetouſneſs, and avoid all occaſions and temptations to it or appearances of it: for robbing the public is robbing many, which is worſe than private theft; as murdering a multitude is worſe than killing an individual. —Nor is the people's liberality leſs worthy of commendation: much more reputable for them, and much more honourable to God, was this proclamation to reſtrain their bounty, than one would have been, which had required an addition to their too ſcanty contributions. It ſhould, however, be carefully obſerved, that though the rich can never devote their ſubſtance too entirely to the ſervice of God, yet they may exceed in the particular application of it: and there have been ages of the church, (and there may ſtill be inſtances) in which an ill-judged liberality has introduced pride, indolence, and luxury, where there ſhould be bright examples of humility, diligence, and ſelf-denial. But this is not the general fault of the age in which we live: and though ſome few individuals may err on this hand, yet the circumſtances of too many, of every denomination, who labour in the word and doctrine, as well as the appearances of many places of public worſhip, evidently prove, that moſt men, in our days, are ſufficiently careful not *thus* to injure the cauſe of godlineſs. However, wiſdom is profitable to direct: and when God puts wiſdom and grace into the heart, the hands will be diligently employed in, or chearfully ſtretched out for, every good work.

and

and made thereunto a crown of gold round about.

12 Alſo he made thereunto a border of an hand-breadth round about: and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about.

13 And he caſt for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners, that *were* in the four feet thereof.

14 Over againſt the border were the rings, the places for the ſtaves, to bear the table.

15 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table.

16 And he made the veſſels which *were* upon the table, his diſhes, and his ſpoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, *of* pure gold.

17 And he made the candleſtick *of* pure gold: *of* beaten work made he the candleſtick, his ſhaft and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers were of the ſame.

18 And ſix branches going out of the ſides thereof: three branches of the candleſtick out of the one ſide thereof, and three branches of the candleſtick out of the other ſide thereof.

19 Three bowls made after the faſhion of almonds, in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds, in another branch, a knop and a flower: ſo throughout the ſix branches, going out of the candleſtick.

20 And in the candleſtick *were* four bowls made like almonds, his knops and his flowers.

21 And a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, according to the ſix branches going out of it.

22 Their knops and their branches were of the ſame: all of it *was* one beaten work *of* pure gold.

23 And he made his ſeven lamps, and his ſnuffers, and his ſnuff-diſhes, *of* pure gold.

24 *Of* a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the veſſels thereof.

25 And he made the incenſe altar *of* ſhittim-wood: the length of it *was* a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit (*it was* four-ſquare,) and two cubits *was* the height of it; the horns thereof were of the ſame.

26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, *both* the top of it, and the ſides thereof round about, and the horns of it: alſo he made unto it a crown of gold round about.

27 And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two ſides thereof, to be places for the ſtaves to bear it withal.

28 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold.

29 And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incenſe of ſweet ſpices, according to the work of the apothecary.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The making of the altar of burnt-offering; and of the laver, the pillars, and hangings for the court, v. 1—20. *2d. The money collected and the uſe made of it, v.* 21—31. (*Notes, &c.* xxvii. xxx. 17—21).

AND he made the altar of burnt-offering *of* ſhittim-wood: five cubits *was* the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, (*it was* four ſquare) and three cubits the height thereof.

2 And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it: the horns thereof were of the ſame, and he overlaid it with braſs.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXVII.] After what hath been already ſpoken, we need only obſerve, that ſuch repetitions were uſeful to the Old Teſtament Church, as in theſe types they chiefly had their Goſpel, and the people were not permitted to ſee the things themſelves, as they were placed within the ſanctuary: thus in the New Teſtament we have the ſame things related in two or three places, with little variation; yet not without uſefulneſs. The exactneſs of the workmen to their rule is worthy of our imitation: and it is never unſeaſonable to obſerve, that through the great Antitype, the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows, our way being opened to the mercy-ſeat, we ſhould continually draw near in faith; feeding daily upon him and his fulneſs, as the nouriſhment of ſouls; walking through this dark world according to the light of his word; and ſeeking for renewed and enlarged anointings of his holy Spirit; that here we may rejoice in and glorify him, and at length be for ever with him.

3 And he made all the veſſels of the altar, the pots, and the ſhovels, and the baſons, *and* the fleſh-hooks, and the fire-pans: all the veſſels thereof made he *of* braſs.

4 And he made for the altar a brazen grate of net-work, under the compaſs thereof, beneath unto the midſt of it.

5 And he caſt four rings for the four ends of the grate of braſs, *to be* places for the ſtaves.

6 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with braſs.

7 And he put the ſtaves into the rings on the ſides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

8 And he made the laver *of* braſs, and the foot of it *of* braſs, of the looking glaſſes of *the women* aſſembling, which aſſembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

9 And he made the court: on the ſouth-ſide ſouthward, the hangings of the court *were* of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits.

10 Their pillars *were* twenty, and their brazen ſockets twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *were of* ſilver.

11 And for the north-ſide, *the hangings were* an hundred cubits, their pillars *were* twenty, and their ſockets of braſs twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

12 And for the weſt ſide *were* hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their ſockets ten: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

13 And for the eaſt ſide eaſtward fifty cubits.

14 The hangings of the one ſide *of the gate were* fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

15 And for the other ſide of the court-gate, on this hand and that hand, *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

16 All the hangings of the court round about *were* of twined linen.

17 And the ſockets for the pillars *were of* braſs; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, *of* ſilver: and the overlaying of their chapiters *of* ſilver; and all the pillars of the court *were* filletted with ſilver.

18 And the hanging for the gate of the court *was* needle-work, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits *was* the length, and the height in the breadth *was* five cubits, anſwerable to the hangings of the court.

19 And their pillars *were* four, and their ſockets *of* braſs four, their hooks *of* ſilver, and the overlaying of their chapiters, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, *were of* braſs.

21 This is the ſum of the tabernacle, *even* of the tabernacle of teſtimony, as it was counted according to the commandment of Moſes, *for* the ſervice of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, ſon to Aaron the prieſt.

22 And Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moſes.

23 And with him *was* Aholiab, ſon of Ahiſamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in ſcarlet, and fine linen.

24 All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the holy *place*, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and ſeven hundred and thirty ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary.

25 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII.] V. 8. *Of the looking-glaſſes*, &c.] Theſe are ſuppoſed to have been plates of braſs highly poliſhed, which, before the invention of glaſs, ſerved for the purpoſe of mirrours. Some women peculiarly devoted to God, and zealous for the eſtabliſhment of his worſhip, (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* ii. 12,) at a time when much braſs was wanted, and perhaps no great quantity in the camp, expreſſed their zeal by parting with their mirrors: which are generally deemed *neceſſary*, and which muſt be allowed to be very *convenient*. Of theſe were formed the brazen laver; which circumſtance might be an inſtructive emblem to the prieſts in their ablutions; and may be the ſame to us: for in the glaſs of God's law we ſhould daily look, that we may know what manner of perſons we are; and ſo diſcover our need of daily repentance, and of waſhing in the blood of Chriſt. (*James* i. 23—25.)

25 And the ſilver of them that were numbered of the congregation, *was* an hundred talents, and a thouſand ſeven hundred and threeſcore and fifteen ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary.

26 A bekah for every man, *that is* half a ſhekel, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for ſix hundred thouſand and three thouſand and five hundred and fifty *men*.

27 And of the hundred talents of ſilver, were caſt the ſockets of the ſanctuary, and the ſockets of the vail; an hundred ſockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a ſocket.

28 And of the thouſand ſeven hundred ſeventy and five *ſhekels*, he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them.

29 And the braſs of the offering *was* ſeventy talents, and two thouſand and four hundred ſhekels.

30 And therewith he made the ſockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the veſſels of the altar,

31 And the ſockets of the court round about, and the ſockets of the court-gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Contains, 1ſt. The making of the prieſts' garments, as before directed, (Notes, &c. xxviii.) *v.* 1—31. *2d. The whole work finiſhed, reviewed, and approved by Moſes, who bleſſed the workmen, v.* 32—43.

AND of the blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, they made clothes of ſervice, to do ſervice in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

2 And he made the ephod *of* gold, blue and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen.

3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires; to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in ſcarlet, and in the fine lining, *with* cunning work.

4 They made ſhoulder-pieces for it, to couple *it* together: by the two edges was it coupled together.

5 And the curious girdle of his ephod that *was* upon it *was* of the ſame, according to the work thereof: *of* gold, blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

6 And they wrought onyx-ſtones incloſed in ouches of gold, graven as ſignets are graven, with the names of the children of Iſrael.

7 And he put them on the ſhoulders of the ephod, *that they ſhould be* ſtones for a memorial to the children of Iſrael; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

8 And he made the breaſt-plate *of* cunning work, like the work of the ephod; *of* gold, blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 It was four-ſquare; they made the breaſt-plate double: a ſpan *was* the length thereof, and a ſpan the breadth thereof, *being* doubled.

V. 26. *A Bekah*, &c.] A ſhekel is generally allowed to be *about* half an ounce troy weight. At half a ſhekel each, 6000 perſons collected a talent of ſilver: conſequently a talent conſiſted of about 125 pound troy weight, or rather more than an hundred weight. This ſeems to have been nearly the general *weight* of a talent of whatever metal: and they who are diſpoſed, may eaſily compute, how much it would be worth of current coin. Exactneſs in a ſubject of more curioſity than uſe, would not anſwer the intention of this publication. This ſilver, called "the "ranſom of their ſouls," (xxx. 12.) was raiſed as a tax, which each muſt pay; all the reſt was voluntary.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all ages of the Church there has been ſome perſons more devoted to God, more conſtant in their attendance upon his ordinances, and more willing to part with lawful things for his ſake, than others. Theſe are never cenſured, but always commended and honoured in God's word: for when relative duties and ſocial obligations are not neglected or violated, we cannot too much renounce the world, deny ourſelves, and devote our all to the Lord, and ſeek our whole happineſs from him. It may alſo be added, that the incloſure of this court, being only of curtains, might intimate that it ſhould in due time be removed: and ſo we may take occaſion to bleſs God for the enlargement of his Church, by the calling of *us* Gentiles into it; and to pray that all remaining boundaries may be removed, and the whole earth filled with the knowledge of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to whom be glory for ever, Amen.

10 And they ſet in it four rows of ſtones: *the firſt* row *was* a ſardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the firſt row.

11 And the ſecond row, an emerald, a ſapphire, and a diamond.

12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyſt.

13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jaſper: *they were* incloſed in ouches of gold in their incloſings.

14 And the ſtones *were* according to the names of the children of Iſrael, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a ſignet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

15 And they made upon the breaſt-plate chains, at the ends *of* wreathen work *of* pure gold.

16 And they made two ouches *of* gold, and two gold rings: and put the two rings in the two ends of the breaſt-plate.

17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breaſt-plate.

18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they faſtened in the two ouches, and put them on the ſhoulder-pieces of the ephod, before it.

19 And they made two rings of gold, and put *them* on the two ends of the breaſt-plate upon the border of it, which *was* on the ſide of the ephod inward.

20 And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two ſides of the ephod underneath, toward the fore-part of it, over againſt the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

21 And they did bind the breaſt-plate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod, with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breaſt-plate might not be looſed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

22 And he made the robe of the ephod *of* woven work, all *of* blue.

23 And *there was* a hole in the midſt of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, *with* a band round about the hole, that it ſhould not rent.

24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, *and* twined *linen*.

25 And they made bells *of* pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates, upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates.

26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to miniſter *in*; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

27 And they made coats *of* fine linen, *of* woven work, for Aaron and for his ſons,

28 And a mitre *of* fine linen, and goodly bonnets *of* fine linen, and linen breeches *of* fine twined linen.

29 And a girdle *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, *of* needle-work; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown, *of* pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like to* the engravings of a ſignet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to faſten *it* on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

32 Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finiſhed: and the children of Iſrael did according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo did they.

33 And they brought the tabernacle unto Moſes, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his ſockets.

34 And the covering of rams' ſkins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' ſkins, and the vail of the covering,

35 The ark of the teſtimony, and the ſtaves thereof, and the mercy-ſeat,

36 The table, *and* all the veſſels thereof, and the ſhew-bread,

37 The pure candleſtick, *with* the lamps thereof, *even with* the lamps to be ſet in order, and all the veſſels thereof, and the oil for light,

38 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the ſweet incenſe, and the hanging for the tabernacle-door.

39 The

39 The brazen altar, and his grate of braſs, his ſtaves, and all his veſſels, the laver and his foot,

40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his ſockets, and the hanging for the court-gate, his cords and his pins, and all the veſſels of the ſervice of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation,

41 The clothes of ſervice to do ſervice in the holy *place*, and the holy garments for Aaron the prieſt, and his ſons' garments to miniſter in the prieſts' office.

42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo the children of Iſrael made all the work.

43 And Moſes did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even ſo had they done it: and Moſes bleſſed them.

CHAP XL.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes, at God's command, ſetting up the tabernacle, and conſecrating it with its furniture, v. 1—33. 2d. The Lord by the cloud and glory taking poſſeſſion of the tabernacle, and guiding and protecting Iſrael, v. 34—38.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 On the firſt day of the firſt month ſhalt thou ſet up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation:

3 And thou ſhalt put therein the ark of the teſtimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

4 And thou ſhalt bring in the table, and ſet in order the things that are to be ſet in order upon it, and thou ſhalt bring in the candleſtick, and light the lamps thereof.

5 And thou ſhalt ſet the altar of gold for the incenſe before the ark of the teſtimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

6 And thou ſhalt ſet the altar of the burnt-offering, before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

7 And thou ſhalt ſet the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and ſhalt put water therein.

8 And thou ſhalt ſet up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court-gate.

9 And thou ſhalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* therein, and ſhalt hallow it, and all the veſſels thereof: and it ſhall be holy.

10 And thou ſhalt anoint the altar of the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXIX.] When unanimity, diligence, and zeal, animate the hearts of numbers in a good cauſe, much may be done in a ſhort time: and when the commandment of God is continually attended to, as the rule of working, all will be done well.—We ought indeed daily to prove our own work, to take the counſel and regard the judgment of others, to preſent all we do before the Lord, and beg to be taught how far he approves or diſapproves it: but the grand trial of our ſervices will be at the concluſion of them. We ought not therefore *raſhly* to judge others, or their works, before the time: nor be lifted up with man's applauſe, nor caſt down by man's reproach, which are often alike ignorant and unmerited: but we ſhould exerciſe ourſelves to keep a conſcience void of offence, be content with its teſtimony, and wait that day, "when the Lord ſhall come, and bring to light the hidden "things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of "the hearts, and then ſhall every man have praiſe of "God." (1 *Cor.* iv. 5.) For though the glory of all the good we do belongs to him, and our beſt needs much forgiveneſs; yet, if by his grace our hearts are humbly upright and willing; and we work by his rule, for his glory, and in dependence on his teaching and aſſiſtance; he will graciouſly applaud us, and ſay, "Well done, "good and faithful ſervant:" and his bleſſing will then abundantly repay our labour, which indeed is even here its own reward. — After his example, therefore, as well as that of Moſes, parents, maſters, miniſters, magiſtrates, and others, ſhould learn not to be always finding fault; but to ſhew themſelves pleaſed with, and to commend, the honeſt endeavours of others to do well. —And they, who do good to the cauſe of true religion have a claim to our prayers for them, even as if they were our own benefactors.

NOTES.

CHAP. XL.] V. 2. *On the firſt day*, &c.] On the fifteenth day of the firſt month the Iſraelites came out of Egypt: on the fiftieth day after that event the law was given; and, with ſeveral intervening delays, Moſes ſpent at leaſt eighty days upon the mount: half of the year muſt therefore have been expired, or perhaps more, before they began to work upon the tabernacle; and in half a year, or ſomewhat leſs, the whole was completed.

burnt-offering, and all his veſſels, and ſanctify the altar: and it ſhall be an altar moſt holy:

11 And thou ſhalt anoint the laver and his foot, and ſanctify it.

12 And thou ſhalt bring Aaron and his ſons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and waſh them with water.

13 And thou ſhalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and ſanctify him; that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſts' office.

14 And thou ſhalt bring his ſons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou ſhalt anoint them, as thou didſt anoint their father, that they may miniſter unto me in the prieſts' office: for their anointing ſhall ſurely be an everlaſting prieſthood, throughout their generations.

16 Thus did Moſes: according to all that the LORD commanded him, ſo did he.

17 And it came to paſs, in the firſt month in the ſecond year, on the firſt *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moſes reared up the tabernacle, and faſtened his ſockets, and ſet up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

19 And he ſpread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

20 And he took and put the teſtimony into the ark, and ſet the ſtaves on the ark, and put the mercy-ſeat above upon the ark.

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and ſet up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the teſtimony; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the ſide of the tabernacle northward without the vail.

23 And he ſet the bread in order upon it, before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moſes.

24 And he put the candleſtick in the tent of the congregation, over againſt the table, on the ſide of the tabernacle ſouthward.

25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail.

27 And he burnt ſweet incenſe thereon, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

28 And he ſet up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle.

29 And he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

30 And he ſet the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to waſh *withal*.

31 And Moſes, and Aaron and his ſons, waſhed their hands and their feet thereat.

32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they waſhed; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and ſet up the hanging of the court-gate: ſo Moſes finiſhed the work.

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 And Moſes was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, becauſe the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Iſrael went onward in all their journeys:

37 But

V. 15. *Everlaſting prieſthood*, &c.] It endured in the family of Aaron till Chriſt came; and in him, the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows, it reſts for ever.

V. 27. *He burnt ſweet incenſe*, &c.] Moſes acted as high prieſt, till the order of Aaron was fully appointed, that he might more entirely reſemble Him, who unites in himſelf the offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. (*Deut.* xviii. 15—19.)

V. 34, 35.] The Lord teſtified his acceptance of the ſervices of the people by his entire reconciliation to them as a nation, and his gracious reſidence amongſt them by the cloud the ſymbol of his ſpecial preſence. This reſted above the tabernacle; while a more reſplendent glory filled it, which Moſes himſelf could not enter for a time: but probably it afterwards was confined to the holy of holies, above the mercy-ſeat, between the cherubim.

V. 36.

37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of the LORD *was* upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was upon it by night, in the ſight of all the houſe of Iſrael, throughout all their journeys.

V. 36—38.] (Notes, xiii. 21, 22. *Iſaiah*, iv. 5, 6.) In alluſion to this ſpecial guidance of Iſrael, many pious perſons make uſe of the expreſſion, "the moving of the cloud" as denoting the providential and gracious direction, which God now affords his people: and doubtleſs it is very allowable thus to accommodate and apply theſe *typical* paſſages to our own circumſtances; provided it be done with ſobriety, judgment, and caution. But we ſhould be careful not to introduce a new rule of duty, or give occaſion to uncertainty, error, or enthuſiaſm, by a vague and indeterminate uſe of ſuch alluſions. We are not under the ſame evident infallible guidance, that Iſrael was: the word of God ſoberly explained is our only, and our ſufficient, rule of duty; in underſtanding it, and in applying general precepts to particular circumſtances, good counſel, fervent prayer, and a careful obſervance of Providence ſhould be employed. Some things are always our duty, when we have opportunity and ability; and theſe need no other direction: other things are lawful in themſelves; but it may be doubtful, whether in our caſe and ſituation they are adviſeable; that is, whether they are likely, all things conſidered, to conduce to the glory of God and our own real good. When after mature conſultation and fervent prayer, ſuch matters *ſtill remain doubtful*; the events of Providence, yea perhaps a ſtrong inward impulſe, may be of weight in the deciſion. But when any undertaking is evidently wrong, or doubtfully right, or plainly inexpedient, or unadviſeable in the opinion of impartial judges; and yet the inclination leans that way: in this caſe, that which men call the "moving of the cloud," or the opening of Providence, is generally no more than a temptation of Satan; the ſuggeſtions of that enemy are often miſtaken for divine impreſſions; and men fancy they are following the Lord, when they are gratifying their own wayward inclinations. Upon the whole, in all doubtful matters, "to the law, and to the teſtimony," plain precepts and maxims of wiſdom are ſurer rules, than the moſt ingenious alluſions: and the book of Providence, as well as the ſuppoſed guidance of the Spirit, muſt be interpreted by, and brought to the teſt of, the plain rules of the written word, "which are the light of our feet and "the lantern of our paths."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſeveral parts of divine revelation, the diſtinct offices of Jeſus Chriſt, and the various graces of the Chriſtian's character, are never ſeen in their glory and beauty, till they are viewed as united in one harmonious whole; which whole the believer values, deſires, and ſeeks to call his own.—The periodical return of the ſeaſons ſhould remind us of our work for God, and our ſouls: and we may hope for a good year, month, week, or day, when we begin them with ſerious attention to the worſhip of God, and ſolemn dedication of ourſelves to him. But when we remember that within this very year, which was entered upon ſo hopefully, the Lord was not well pleaſed with the moſt of theſe Iſraelites, and doomed "their carcaſes to fall "in the wilderneſs;" we may juſtly fear, leſt we ſhould amuſe and deceive ourſelves with a form of godlineſs: and the conſideration, how few of them entered Canaan, ſhould warn young people not to poſtpone the care of their ſouls, till they are ſettled in life, leſt that ſhould prove too late.—Happy they, who like Moſes receive repeated teſtimony from God, that they do his will and keep his commandments. But through him, let us look unto Jeſus Chriſt, who collects his people from all nations and ages; and according to the will of the Father, having waſhed them in his blood, and anointed them with the unction of his grace, forms them into one holy temple, an habitation of God through the Spirit, wherein he dwells to illuminate, to purify, to guide, and defend them through life; and in which he will dwell for ever. Being then led by the Spirit into imitation of, as well as dependence on, Chriſt; into a devout attendance on his ordinances, and obedience to his precepts, we ſhall be preſerved from loſing our way, and be "led in the midſt of the paths of judgment," unto the habitation of his holineſs in heaven.

THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

LEVITICUS.

This Book, which the Greek Tranſlators have called LEVITICUS, *from its relation to the Levitical Prieſthood, tribe, and ceremonies, conſiſts almoſt entirely of Laws delivered to Moſes from above the Mercy-ſeat, during the firſt month after the Tabernacle was erected. It contains ſcarcely any hiſtory, except that of the Conſecration of Aaron and his Sons, with the aweful death of Nadab and Abihu which accompanied it. Though moral Precepts are in ſome places intermixed, and towards the cloſe are many gracious promiſes and terrible Threatenings; yet almoſt the whole Book conſiſts of ritual Appointments. Much of their Goſpel, under that inſtitution, was contained in theſe antiquated Laws; the particular and exact knowledge of which would be uſeful, nay neceſſary, to the Iſraelites. The enlightened Believer will ſee in them all the myſteries of redeeming Love, and the peculiarities of the Goſpel Revelation. But as they are not now obligatory as Precepts or Ordinances, and, bleſſed be God, we are favoured with clearer light in the New Teſtament: it will not be neceſſary to attend* very minutely *to the* Expoſition *of this part of Scripture; but we may confine ourſelves almoſt entirely to thoſe enquiries, which are more immediately connected with our Edification.*

Before Chriſt 1490.] [*Before Chriſt* 1490.

CHAP. I.

Contains the law of the burnt-offering; 1ſt. Of a bullock, v. 1—9. *2d. Of a ſheep, or goat, v.* 10—13. *3d. Of fowls, v.* 14—17.

AND the LORD called unto Moſes, and ſpake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye ſhall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.

3 If his offering *be* a burnt-ſacrifice of the herd,

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 2. *An offering*, &c.] The offering of ſacrifices was evidently an ordinance of true religion, from the fall of man until the coming of Chriſt; and from thence was by tradition derived into the ſeveral ſpecies of falſe religion which have prevailed: but until this period no very particular regulations ſeem to have been appointed. The ſacrifices were always offered of thoſe animals which were called clean; the blood was ſhed, the whole body or part of it was burnt with fire, and the reſt ſeems to have been regulated at the diſcretion of the ſacrificer; and in *moſt caſes* the head of a family, or the perſon who preſented the ſacrifice, officiated as prieſt in ſhedding its blood and burning its fleſh. But under the Moſaic diſpenſation very particular laws were given upon this ſubject; connected with the ſeparation of the tribe of Levi, and the appointment of Aaron's family excluſively to the prieſthood. The general intention of theſe laws is very evident: the exact meaning of every one in particular is often very obſcure to us: though it might be very plain and uſeful to the Iſraelites; eſpecially in diſtinguiſhing and ſeparating them from their heathen neighbours. In general we may obſerve, that the ſeveral ſacrifices not only in divers ways typified Chriſt, but alſo ſhadowed out the believer's duty, character, privilege, and communion with God. And indeed, if we except the divine Perſon, the miracles, and the meritorious mediation of the Lord Jeſus, there is ſcarcely any thing in the whole Scripture ſpoken of him, which is ſo *appropriate* to him, as not to have alſo a ſubordinate meaning

herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering: and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar, that *is* by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

6 And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces.

7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire.

8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar.

9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, *to be* a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

10 And if his offering *be* of the flocks, *namely* of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the

meaning which respects his people. We should not therefore hesitate to apply the same types, both to Christ and to Christians, in different respects.—Having premised this, I would proceed with all possible brevity to comment on these various kinds of sacrifice; and in general, without endeavouring further to explain the RITUAL of them than the text does, (as it is not necessary we should understand the exact process of the priest in offering the sacrifice,) I would only point out what I can discern in them, which relates to Christ and Christians. Such animals only were offered in sacrifice, as are useful and valuable to man, which he is able to possess as property, and the increase of which he promotes. And not all those: but such only as are most domestic, harmless, patient, cleanly; and whose flesh is commonly used for food: not filthy swine, not devouring lions, not the warlike horse, not the subtle fox, not the voracious dog, nor any creature which subsists on animal food; nor yet the timorous hare or deer, who flee from the intercourse of of man. Such animals alone were sacrificed, as best represented what Christ was, and what his people ought to be: as the laborious patient ox; the gentle, harmless, and cleanly sheep; and the tender loving dove.

V. 3. *A burnt sacrifice.*] The burnt sacrifices were wholly consumed upon the altar; and typified Christ, in the intenseness of his sufferings, both of body and soul, when he gave himself a sacrifice for our sins, and when, at the same time that man shed his blood, "it pleased the LORD "to bruise him and to put him to grief." They also represented the perfection of that zeal and love, with which he voluntarily went through his sufferings for us: and denoted the believer's solemn dedication of himself without reserve, body and soul, to the service and glory of God; whether by doing or suffering his will, whether by life or death. (*Rom.* xii. 1. *Phil.* 1. 20.) A male without blemish was deemed the most complete of the kind. Thus Christ was without spot or blemish: thus his people must serve him with their best in every thing, and they are themselves the excellent of the earth. (*Ps.* xvi. 3.)—The general sacrifices of the congregation daily, weekly, monthly, and annually, as well as those for the great feasts, were prescribed by express laws; so were the sin and trespass-offerings, which were to be offered on particular occasions: but the burnt-offerings here spoken of were voluntary, and seem to have been intended as a voluntary confession of sin, when a man was consciously guilty before God, though nothing was chargeable upon him which could exclude him from the congregation; it was also a voluntary expression of repentance, faith, and devotedness to God. Thus Christ willingly offered himself for us, and we by his grace must freely confess our unworthiness, our dependence on him and obligations to him, and willingly devote ourselves to God through him.

V. 4. *And he shall put*, &c.] This implied an acknowledgement that he, who brought the sacrifice, was deserving of the wrath of God, and of that destruction of body and soul which is connected with it: but that he desired and hoped that the sacrifice, which he thus offered to the Lord, might be substituted in his stead; and that its death, and its being burnt upon the altar, might be accepted as a typical atonement for his sin. All this prefigured Christ *bearing our sins* in his own body on the tree; and the humble believing application of his atonement to the heart and conscience of the broken-hearted penitent, for his acceptance with God.

V. 5. *And he*, &c.] It is the general opinion, that the Priests or Levites alone were employed in *slaying* the sacrifices: but the scripture no where says it, and the language of this and other passages seem to denote the contrary. Aaron indeed was directed to slay *his own* ram of consecration, (*Exod.* xxix. 8, 16. *Lev.* ix. 8, 15, 18.) and those of the nation as their representative; and the Levites slew the sacrifices for such *as were not clean*, in Hezekiah's days. (2 *Chron.* xxx. 17.) But the law seems to appoint the offerer to slay the sacrifice, and the priest to sprinkle the blood and burn the flesh; which more aptly typified Christ slain by the hands of sinners, as well as for our sins. The sprinkling of the blood denoted that the efficacy of Christ's death renders all our religious services accepted, if we truly believe in him; which otherwise would not be deemed worthy of any favourable notice from a holy God, being all defiled with sin. This also shewed them that ordinarily sacrifices ought not to be offered any where but at the door of the tabernacle.

V. 9. *His inwards, and his legs*, &c.] This may denote the inward purity of heart, and outward holiness of life, which were perfect in Christ; and are in a measure to be found in his truly devoted disciples.

altar

altar northward before the LORD: and the prieſts, Aarons's ſons, ſhall ſprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

12 And he ſhall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the prieſt ſhall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar.

13 But he ſhall waſh the inwards and the legs with water: and the prieſt ſhall bring *it* all, and burn *it* upon the altar: it *is* a burnt-ſacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

14 And if the burnt-ſacrifice for his offering to the LORD *be* of fowls, then he ſhall bring his offering of turtle doves, or of young pigeons.

15 And the prieſt ſhall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn *it* on the altar: and the blood thereof ſhall be wrung out at the ſide of the altar.

16 And he ſhall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and caſt it beſide the altar, on the eaſt part, by the place of the aſhes.

17 And he ſhall cleave it, with the wings thereof, *but* ſhall not divide *it* aſunder: and the prieſt ſhall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that *is* upon the fire: it *is* a burnt-ſacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

V. 14—17.] This was the ſacrifice of the poor, and was as aptly typical of Chriſt's atonement, and would as fully expreſs the offerer's repentance, faith, and devotedneſs to God, as the more coſtly ſacrifices; provided poverty, not covetouſneſs, induced the offerer to bring it. The prieſts would need as much care in offering this ſacrifice, as any of the others; though it were neither ſo ſplendid in itſelf, nor attended with any perquiſites to them; which was to teach them, and us, that the ſouls of the poor are to be as carefully watched over, as thoſe of the wealthy; though in *a ſecular ſenſe* it may not be either ſo honourable, or ſo advantageous, to thoſe who have the overſight of them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It might have been ſaid of all theſe ſacrifices, "to what "purpoſe is this waſte?" (*Matt.* xxvi. 8.) All theſe bulls and goats might have been ſold for very much, and given to the poor; and would have ſupported very many indigent families: why then burn all this fleſh upon the altar? Yet were they appointed by God himſelf, and were "a ſweet ſavour" unto him; becauſe they both typified the ſatisfactory ſufferings of Chriſt, and were apt expreſſions of the humble faith and love of thoſe who preſented them. That can never be waſted which is ſpent acceptably to the Lord, and honourably to his name: be our obedience ever ſo expenſive, we can be no loſers in the event: and he can both ſupply our wants, repay our loſſes, and furniſh us with a ſufficiency to give to the poor alſo, whom we have always with us. But if an Iſraelite might not grudge the expence, labour, and inconvenience of his religion; how inexcuſable are we, if we ungratefully refuſe the eaſy, pleaſant, and reaſonable ſervice, which is required of us under the Chriſtian diſpenſation! Indeed the Lord always prevents us with his goodneſs; and we can no more offer the ſacrifice of a broken heart, or of praiſe and thankſgiving, than an Iſraelite could offer a bullock or a goat, except as he hath firſt given unto us. Of his own we preſent unto him; and the more we do in the Lord's ſervice, the greater are our obligations to him; both for the will, the ability, and the opportunity. Though the Lord in many things leaves us to preſcribe to ourſelves the proportion, which ſhall be immediately ſpent in his ſervice, whether of our time or of our ſubſtance; and though two doves, or two mites may in ſome caſes be more acceptable, than thouſands of bulls and goats, or of gold and ſilver, in others: yet where God's providence hath put more into a man's power, ſuch ſcanty oblations will not be accepted; becauſe no proper expreſſions of a willing mind. "But this I ſay, he which ſoweth ſparingly "ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bounti-"fully ſhall reap alſo bountifully," &c. (2 *Cor.* ix. 6—8.) Whilſt we, in all theſe ſacrifices, have our *own* ſinfulneſs and Chriſt's ſufferings brought to our remembrance; we ſhould call upon ourſelves to renew our repentance; to exerciſe faith in and love to the Saviour; to reflect deeply upon the freeneſs and vaſtneſs of *his* love to us, and the immenſe price our ſalvation coſt him; that ſo we may deduce from them arguments and motives to increaſe our abhorrence of, and determination of heart againſt, all ſin; and our devotedneſs in body and ſoul to his ſervice, whatſoever he may call us to renounce, venture, do, or ſuffer for his ſake. Nor let us forget, that though our bodies are to be *living* ſacrifices unto God: yet the body of ſin muſt be deſtroyed, the fleſh with its luſts crucified, the deeds of the body mortified, and the ſoul baptized with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire, conſuming all its droſs and kindling all holy affections therein. Nay *poſſibly* we may not only be called to other ſuffering ſelf-denying ſervices, but even to lay down our lives for him, who was a ſacrifice for our ſins. In the mean time, in contemplating thoſe animals, which were appointed as emblems of the Saviour's purity, patience, meekneſs, and uſefulneſs; let us endeavour, and pray to be enabled to tranſcribe every amiable and heavenly line in his perfect character, into our own temper and converſation; that we may be conformed to his image, and walk in his ſteps, as an evidence that we are waſhed in his blood, and ſtand accepted in his righteouſneſs, "in whom the Father was well pleaſed."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains the law of the meat-offering, and of the voluntary offering of firſt-fruits, v. 1—16.

AND when any will offer a meat-offering unto the LORD, his offering ſhall be *of* fine flour; and he ſhall pour oil upon it, and put frankincenſe thereon.

2 And he ſhall bring it to Aaron's ſons, the prieſts: and he ſhall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincenſe thereof; and the prieſt ſhall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, *to be* an offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

3 And the remnant of the meat-offering *ſhall be* Aaron's and his ſons: *it is* a thing moſt holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

4 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven, *it ſhall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

5 And if thy oblation *be* a meat-offering *baken* in a pan, it ſhall be *of* fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil.

6 Thou ſhalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it *is* a meat-offering.

7 And if thy oblation *be* a meat-offering *baken* in the frying-pan, it ſhall be made *of* fine flour with oil.

8 And thou ſhalt bring the meat-offering that is made of theſe things, unto the LORD: and when it is preſented unto the prieſt, he ſhall bring it unto the altar.

9 And the prieſt ſhall take from the meat-offering a memorial thereof, and ſhall burn *it* upon the altar: *it is* an offering made by fire of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

10 And that which is left of the meat-offering, *ſhall be* Aaron's and his ſons: *it is* a thing moſt holy, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

11 No meat-offering, which ye ſhall bring unto the LORD, ſhall be made with leaven: for ye ſhall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.

12 As for the oblation of the firſt-fruits, ye ſhall offer them unto the LORD: but they ſhall not be burnt on the altar for a ſweet ſavour.

13 And every oblation of thy meat-offering ſhalt

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *A meat-offering*, &c.] Meat-offerings were appointed to be offered with other ſacrifices; (*Numb.* xv;) but theſe, which are regulated in this chapter, were offered alone as a voluntary oblation. They may typify Chriſt as preſented to God for us, and as being the bread of life to our ſouls: but they rather ſeem to denote that acknowledgment of our obligation to God for providential bleſſings, and thoſe good works, which are acceptable to God, when preſented and performed in the proper manner. Theſe meat-offerings therefore are mentioned after the burnt-offerings; for without an intereſt in the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and devotedneſs of heart to God, ſuch ſervices cannot be accepted. It was commanded that they ſhould conſiſt of fine flour, one of the moſt uſeful of the productions of the earth; and that oil ſhould be poured on it, which was uſed as butter is with us, and was therefore proper for an oblation which was food for the prieſts. It might alſo denote the neceſſity of the influences of the holy Spirit to render our works GOOD in the ſight of God: Frankincenſe likewiſe was added, which might repreſent the interceſſion of Chriſt that renders them accepted.

V. 2, 3.] All the frankincenſe, and part of the oil and flour, being burnt upon the altar of burnt-offering, might remind the people that their beſt ſervices muſt be offered through the atonement of the Saviour; that the whole muſt be preſented unto God through him, and done for his ſake; and that, as their good works would in this way be accepted of God, and come up as a memorial before him, ſo, in their own nature they were fitted to be ſerviceable to men, which was ſignified by the reſidue of the meat-offering being eaten by the prieſts. (*Acts.* x. 4. 31.)

V. 11. *Leaven*, &c.] Leaven is the emblem of pride, malice, and hypocriſy; honey of ſenſual pleaſure. The former are directly oppoſite to thoſe graces of humility, love, and ſincerity, which God approves; and the latter takes men off from the exerciſes of devotion, and the practice of good works. Probably both leaven and honey had been much uſed in idolatrous worſhip. Chriſt was in his character and ſacrifice perfectly free from the things denoted by leaven, and his ſuffering life and agonizing death were the very reverſe of that pleaſure, which the honey repreſented: and his people are called to follow him, and to be conformed to him.

V. 12. *As for the oblation*, &c.] As theſe firſt-fruits were not to be burnt upon the altar, but to be eaten by the prieſts; honey and leaven, being good for food as God's creatures, might be preſented with them.

V. 13. *Salt of the covenant*, &c.] Covenants were generally ratified at an amicable feaſt, at which ſalt was always uſed; hence it became an emblem of friendſhip.

shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

14 And if thou offer a meat-offering of thy first-fruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire, *even* corn beaten out of full ears.

15 And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it *is* a meat-offering.

16 And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, *part* of the beaten corn thereof, and *part* of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Many Scriptures represent the blessings of reconciliation to God through Christ and communion with him, as a feast which the Lord has prepared for us, to which he invites us, where he meets us, and at which he ratifies his covenant with us. Salt is an emblem of incorruption, and intimated the perpetuity, yea eternity, of the covenant which is made with true Christians: it also represented sincerity and true grace, without which we cannot have this covenant ratified with us, nor offer any acceptable services. This is an incorruptible seed, and ensures perseverance in the possessor; and it is instrumental to prevent the total corruption and destruction of the world, through the believer's example, influence, and prayers. (*Matt.* v. 13. *Mark*, 49, 50. *Col.* iv. 6.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is that excellency in Christ, and in his mediatory work, that no types and shadows, however varied and multiplied, can adequately represent: and our dependence on it is so entire, that we must never lose sight of it, in any thing we do, if we would be accepted of God, and glorify him. Even our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, our works of mercy, charity, and righteousness, yea every good work, must spring from his grace, and his love produced in our hearts; rise up, as it were, with his sacrifice from the altar of burnt-offering; and be presented through his intercession: that "whatsoever we do in word, and in "deed, we may do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, "giving thanks to God, and the Father by him." (*Col.* iii. 17.) Thus presented, our acknowledgments of common mercies, and our most ordinary actions of justice and benevolence to men, and especially of kindness to the poor and to his servants, will be "a sweet savour unto "the Lord." (*Phil.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.) But let us take care, that we leaven not our works with pride and ostentation, hypocrisy or malice, or spoil them with indulging fleshly lusts which war against the soul: but instead thereof, that they be seasoned with the salt of true grace, that they may be persevering in themselves, comfortable to us, honourable to God, and instrumental to

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. The law of the peace-offering, v. 1—16.
2d. A prohibition to eat the fat, or the blood, v. 17.

AND if his oblation *be* a sacrifice of peace-offering, if he offer *it* of the herd, whether *it be* male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD.

2 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

3 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the

the good of others. In all this we must look unto Jesus and follow his example, devoting our first and best in every thing to the service of God through him.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *A sacrifice of peace-offering, &c.*] The peace-offerings were voluntary oblations, in performance of a vow, in acknowledgement of favours received, in seeking some special blessing from God; or in expressing zeal and love for his worship, and a disposition to have social and pious fellowship with friends, with the priests and Levites, or with the poor Israelites.—They particularly represented the application of the purchased salvation of Christ to the heart and conscience; the communications of peace and comfort through him to the believer's soul; and the sweet communion which his reconciled people hold with him and with each other in his ordinances. This is, as it were, a feast upon a sacrifice; whilst "his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink "indeed" to their souls; and whilst they are enabled to exercise faith, love, and gratitude to him, and love to each other for his sake, with enlarged hearts rejoicing in each other's comfort, and communicating to each other's necessities.—The peace-offerings also intimated, that all the blessings which sinners enjoy, must be sought, and acknowledged as coming through the sacrifice of Christ; that spiritual consolations are only to be found in communion with him; and that the greatest sweetness of temporal mercies arises from receiving and enjoying them, as the fruit of his atonement and as the pledges of his love; and from sharing them with his people, by which they are rendered pure and sanctified in the possession and enjoyment.

V. 2—5.] The appointment, that the offerer should lay his hand on the head of the peace-offering, shewed the necessity of repentance, confession of sin, and faith in a vicarious sacrifice; and the animal was thus devoted to God as a typical atonement, to suffer the punishment which the offerer had merited. The burning of the fat of the inwards might intimate, that we must be inward and hearty in

the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

5 And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt-sacrifice, which *is* upon the wood that *is* on the fire: *it is* an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

6 And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the LORD, be *of* the flock, male or female; he shall offer it without blemish.

7 If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD.

8 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar.

9 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat thereof *and* the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the back-bone: and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards,

10 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

11 And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: *it is* the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD.

12 And if his offering *be* a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD.

13 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about.

14 And he shall offer thereof his offering, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

15 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

16 And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: *it is* the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour. All the fat *is* the LORD's.

17 *It shall be* a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

CHAP.

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all our services, calling "upon our souls, and all that is within us" to exercise repentance, faith, love, and gratitude; and giving up our hearts unto the Lord.—Or it may imply that our inward lusts must be mortified and destroyed, if we would have peace and communion with God; especially, that the insensibility and obduracy of the heart and conscience must be removed; for *fatness of heart* is a scriptural representation of this insensibility, as the fat of a living animal is supposed to be destitute of feeling.—This was to be burnt upon the sacrifice of burnt-offering: for no self-denial, mortification of the flesh, or devotedness to God, however earnestly attempted, can either be successful, or meet acceptance, but through the sacrifice of Christ, and by the supply of his Spirit which, as fire, consumes our lusts and purifies our hearts.—When these appointments had been complied with, the priests had a portion of the peace-offering assigned them, (vii. 11—15;) and then the offerer and his friends religiously feasted upon the remainder.

V. 9. *The whole rump*, &c.] This was frequently very large and fat in those countries; and therefore in these smaller sacrifices it was joined to the inward fat to be burned upon the altar.

V. 11. *It is the food*, &c.] This was the part of the offering which fed the sacred fire that was emblematical of the divine justice. In this manner it typified the satisfaction for sin, which was actually made by the death of Christ.—What with the daily sacrifices, the occasional burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, the fire upon the altar would generally be thus supplied.

V. 17. *That ye eat neither fat nor blood.*] That is, neither the blood which is contained in the veins and arteries, nor the suet or the fat which is within the animal: for the blood which assumes the form of gravy, and the fat which is intermixed with the other flesh, might be eaten. This law not only related to the sacrifices, but to all the cattle they slaughtered for food; which might teach them self-denial.—But especially it taught them to observe the distinction between common and sacred things; it preserved them unInfected with the superstitions, and separate from the company, of idolaters; and tended to impress them more deeply with the idea of some important mystery, in the shedding of the blood and the burning of the fat of the solemn sacrifices.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Penitent confessions, and a believing dependence on Christ must accompany all our thanksgivings, praises, and prayers; and even all our undertakings or enjoyments, if we would prosper and be comfortable.—This Prince of Peace,

CHAP. IV.

Contains the law of the ſin-offering, 1ſt. For a prieſt, or for the congregation, v. 1—21. *2d. For a ruler, v.* 22—26. *3d. For a private perſon, v.* 27—35.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If a ſoul ſhall ſin through ignorance againſt any of the commandments of the LORD, (*concerning things* which ought not to be done,) and ſhall do againſt any of them:

3 If the prieſt that is anointed do ſin according to the ſin of the people: then let him bring for his ſin which he hath ſinned, a young bullock without blemiſh, unto the LORD, for a ſin-offering.

4 And he ſhall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and ſhall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.

5 And the prieſt that is anointed ſhall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation.

6 And the prieſt ſhall dip his finger in the blood, and ſprinkle of the blood ſeven times before the LORD, before the vail of the ſanctuary.

7 And the prieſt ſhall put *ſome* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of ſweet incenſe before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation: and ſhall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And he ſhall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the ſin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it ſhall he take away.

10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings: and the prieſt ſhall burn them upon the altar of the burnt-offering.

11 And the ſkin of the bullock, and all his fleſh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,

12 Even the whole bullock ſhall he carry forth

Peace, having made *our peace* with the blood of his croſs, now preaches peace to ſinners, who are far off; through him as OUR PEACE, the believer has peace with God and with his conſcience; and the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding keepeth his heart and mind, and ruling there, diſpoſeth him to follow peace with all men.—Peace is the legacy which the Chriſtian inherits according to the Saviour's Teſtament; peace is his privilege, peace is his employment; to be peaceable and to be a peace-maker are his diſtinguiſhed characteriſtics.—Feeding in his heart upon Chriſt by faith with thankſgiving, he enjoys ſweet communion with God and his ſaints; becomes lively and zealous in religious exerciſes; learns to treat divine things, and eſpecially the blood of atonement, with ſacred reverence; grows gradually more and more dead to, and indifferent about, ſenſual indulgences; yet has double reliſh for common mercies. He is alſo liberal and zealous, and ready to communicate; and increaſes his ſocial enjoyments, by ſharing his bleſſings with others around him; and by avoiding ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and contention, which are the bane of our real happineſs.—Thus amiable, uſeful, and happy are conſiſtent Chriſtians: may the Lord multiply grace, mercy, and peace to all, who have attained to, or are aſpiring after, ſuch privileges, and who would bear ſuch a character: and may he fill all the nations of the earth with theſe ſons of peace and love. **Amen.**

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *If a ſoul ſin*, &c.] That is, *if any perſon ſin*; for the ſoul is indeed the agent, the body only the inſtrument in committing ſin: However, we muſt allow that this exact preciſion is not obſerved in the language of the Scriptures. The ſin-offering ſeems to have been appointed for ſuch ſins alone when ignorantly committed, as when done preſumptuouſly were puniſhable with death.

V. 3. *If the prieſt that is anointed*, &c.] This is generally underſtood of the high prieſt, who was moſt ſolemnly anointed: but as there is no mention of the ordinary prieſts ſeparately in the law of the ſin-offering, who were equally liable to ſin with the high prieſt; they too ſeem to have been included with him in this firſt regulation. (*Ex.* xl. 13.)

V. 6, 7.] Theſe ceremonies implied that the ſin of the prieſt, though it were committed ignorantly, had polluted all his ſervices; nor could any thing which he did be any more profitable to himſelf or the people, except that were expiated by the blood of the ſin-offering.

V. 11. *The ſkin*, &c.] The ſkin and the fleſh of the ſin-offerings were the prieſt's perquiſite: but when he offered the ſin-offering for himſelf, or for the congregation, the whole was burnt; as a more effectual expreſſion of the heinouſneſs of the offence, and the abhorrence in which he held it.

forth without the camp, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out, shall he be burnt.

13 And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD, *concerning things* which should not be done, and are guilty:

14 When the sin which they have sinned against it is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.

16 And the priest that is anointed, shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation.

17 And the priest shall dip his finger *in some* of the blood, and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, *even* before the vail.

18 And he shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar, which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

19 And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn *it* upon the altar.

20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

21 And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it *is* a sin-offering for the congregation.

22 When a ruler hath sinned, and done *somewhat* through ignorance *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God, *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty;

23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish.

24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt-offering before the LORD: it *is* a sin-offering.

25 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering.

26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27 And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD, *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering.

30 And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offerings; and the priest shall

V. 12. *Without the camp*, &c.] Thus the guilt was *typically* conveyed clean away from the whole congregation, who were otherwise liable to suffer for it.—Christ, who was made sin, *or a sin-offering*, for us, suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, as bearing away the sin of his people, that when it is sought for it might no where be found. This was also expressive of the nature of true repentance, which turns sin as it were out of doors, out of the camp; and refuses to have any thing more to do with it.

burn *it* upon the altar, for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

32 And if he bring a lamb for a ſin-offering, he ſhall bring it a female without blemiſh.

33 And he ſhall lay his hand upon the head of the ſin-offering, and ſlay it for a ſin-offering, in the place where they kill the burnt-offering.

34 And the prieſt ſhall take of the blood of the ſin-offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and ſhall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

35 And he ſhall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings: and the prieſt ſhall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for his ſin that he hath committed, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

CHAP. V.

Contains the law of the treſpaſs-offering, 1ſt. In ordinary caſes, v. 1—13. 2d. In things ſacred, v. 14—19.

AND if a ſoul ſin, and hear the voice of ſwearing, and *is* a witneſs, whether he hath ſeen or known *of it*; if he do not utter *it*, then he ſhall bear his iniquity.

2 Or if a ſoul touch any unclean thing, whether *it be* a carcaſe of an unclean beaſt, or a carcaſe of unclean cattle, or the carcaſe of unclean creeping things, and *if* it be hidden from him; he alſo ſhall be unclean, and guilty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is evident that God hath never had any infallible vicegerent in his Church on earth: for even the high prieſt appointed by himſelf with Urim and Thummim, who had acceſs to his oracle in the holy place to enquire of him; and the whole Church of God under that diſpenſation, were ſuppoſed liable to fall into ſins *of ignorance*; and to ſanction by their authority, example, and general uſage, ſuch practices as were directly contrary to the commandments of God. All pretenſions therefore to infallibility, whether in an individual, or in a multitude, are preſumptuous uſurpations, claims of arrogance, and ſure marks of Antichriſt. However, though we are all liable to err, and ignorance is an alleviation of our guilt, it is not a ſufficient excuſe: with the Bible in our hands, it is generally the effect of pride, ſloth, and inattention, and would be avoided, were we duly anxious to know the truth and will of God; and our conſequent tranſgreſſions ariſe from want of circumſpection. We have need therefore to uſe frequent ſelf-examination, joined with ſerious peruſal of the Scriptures, and earneſt prayers for the convincing influences of the Spirit of God, that we may detect our ſins of ignorance; in order that we may be humbled for them, confeſs, repent of, and forſake them, and ſo obtain forgiveneſs through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.—But let us beware of preſumptuous ſins: for though they alſo may be forgiven through his all-ſufficient ſacrifice; yet when they gain the dominion, they often provoke God to leave a poor wretch to final impenitence and unbelief.—They, who ſuſtain public characters, much more diſhonour God and injure others by their ſins, than more obſcure individuals: they have therefore double need for circumſpection, watchfulneſs, and earneſt prayer for the divine teaching and aſſiſtance; and have alſo a peculiar right to expect a place in the prayers of others, who are all intereſted in their conduct. This is eſpecially the caſe of miniſters of the Goſpel, in whom ignorance of God's commandments is peculiarly ſhameful; to whoſe ſacred character every ſin is a direct contradiction; and whoſe evil examples will operate as a fatal and ſwift-ſpreading infection.—In all caſes public ſcandals require public acknowledgements, however contrary they may be to the pride of our hearts.—Nations, in their political capacity by their rulers, have need to prevent, to puniſh, and to purge out national ſins, if they would eſcape national calamities.—None are ſo highly advanced in rank, or ſo ſacred by their office, as to be excuſed from exerciſing repentance and humiliation before God; or as to have no occaſion for, or no benefit from, the atonement of Chriſt: and none are ſo low and inconſiderable, as either to be exempted from the ſame duties, or excluded from the ſame advantages. Let us then learn, in the exerciſe of daily ſelf-examination, repentance, and faith, to put away both the guilt and the love and practice of ſin: and let us pray with David, that the Lord would "cleanſe us from our ſecret ſins; "and keep us from preſumptuous ſins, leſt they get the domi-"nion over us; and that the words of our mouths, and the "meditation of our hearts, may be always acceptable in the "ſight of the Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer." (*Pſalm* xix. 12. 14.)

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Hear the voice of ſwearing*, &c.] That is, if a man were adjured, and required upon oath to bear teſtimony in a court of juſtice, and did not declare the whole; though he did not bear poſitive falſe witneſs, yet he ſhould conſider himſelf as burdened with the guilt of a great ſin.

V. 2. *If it be hidden*, &c.] When a man had contracted ceremonial uncleanneſs, and had, without the appointed purification, inadvertently or ignorantly attended upon ſacred things, he by his careleſſneſs contracted guilt before God.

3 Or if he touch the uncleanneſs of a man, whatſoever uncleanneſs *it be* that a man ſhall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth *of it*, then he ſhall be guilty.

4 Or if a ſoul ſwear, pronouncing with *his* lips to do evil, or to do good, whatſoever *it be* that a man ſhall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth *of it*, then he ſhall be guilty in one of theſe.

5 And it ſhall be when he ſhall be guilty in one of theſe *things*, that he ſhall confeſs that he hath ſinned in that *thing*.

6 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD for his ſin which he hath ſinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a ſin-offering: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ſin.

7 And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he ſhall bring, for his treſpaſs which he hath committed, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering.

8 And he ſhall bring them unto the prieſt, who ſhall offer *that* which *is* for the ſin-offering firſt, and wring off his head from his neck, but ſhall not divide *it* aſunder.

9 And he ſhall ſprinkle of the blood of the ſin-offering upon the ſide of the altar; and the reſt of the blood ſhall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it *is* a ſin-offering.

10 And he ſhall offer the ſecond *for* a burnt-offering, according to the manner: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, for his ſin which he hath ſinned, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

11 But if he be not able to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; then he that ſinned, ſhall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a ſin-offering: he ſhall put no oil upon it, neither ſhall he put *any* frankincenſe thereon: for it *is* a ſin-offering.

12 Then ſhall he bring it to the prieſt, and the prieſt ſhall take his handful of it, *even* a memorial thereof, and burn *it* on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a ſin-offering.

13 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, as touching his ſin that he hath ſinned in one of theſe, and it ſhall be forgiven him, and *the remnant* ſhall be the prieſt's, as a meat-offering.

14 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

15 If a ſoul commit a treſpaſs, and ſin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he ſhall bring for his treſpaſs unto the LORD, a ram without blemiſh out of the flocks, with thy eſtimation by ſhekels of ſilver, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, for a treſpaſs-offering.

16 And he ſhall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and ſhall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the prieſt: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

17 And if a ſoul ſin, and commit any of theſe things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wiſt *it* not, yet is he guilty, and ſhall bear his iniquity.

18 And he ſhall bring a ram without ble-

V. 4. *If it be hid from him*, &c.] Having either ſworn raſhly at firſt, or through forgetfulneſs failed of performing his oath.

V. 6. *Treſpaſs-offering.*] Theſe ſacrifices ſeem to have been ſomething of the ſame nature with the ſin-offerings; only to have been offered upon leſs occaſions; and more entirely as a matter of conſcience before God, without regard to any temporal puniſhment denounced.

V. 11. *No oil*, &c.] The oil and frankincenſe, which accompanied the voluntary meat-offerings, ſeem to have repreſented the comfortable influences of the Holy Spirit, and the interceſſion of Chriſt, which render the religious exerciſes and willing ſervices of the true believer joyful to himſelf. They were therefore in this treſpaſs-offering to be omitted; as it expreſſed the ſorrow of the offender, and the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin.

V. 15, 16.] When any one had failed of paying the full of his tythes, firſt-fruits, or other oblations, and had unwittingly kept back any part of the portion which the Lord demanded; he was not only required to make reſtitution in ſtandard money, adding a fifth part thereto; but alſo to offer a ram for a treſpaſs-offering, as ſoon as he diſcovered his defraud.

miſh

miſh out of the flock, with thy eſtimation, for a treſpaſs-offering unto the prieſt: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred, and wiſt *it* not; and it ſhall be forgiven him.

19 It *is* a treſpaſs-offering: he hath certainly treſpaſſed againſt the Lord.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. An additional law concerning the treſpaſs-offering, v. 1—7. 2d. Rules for the prieſt reſpecting the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering, v. 8—18. 3d. The high prieſt's meat-offering, v. 19—23. 4th Rules reſpecting the ſin-offering, v. 24—30.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 If a ſoul ſin, and commit a treſpaſs againſt the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowſhip, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour;

3 Or have found that which was loſt, and lieth concerning it, and ſweareth falſely; in any of all theſe that a man doeth, ſinning therein:

4 Then it ſhall be, becauſe he hath ſinned and is guilty, that he ſhall reſtore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the loſt thing which he found;

5 Or all that about which he hath ſworn falſely; he ſhall even reſtore it in the principal, and ſhall add the fifth part more thereto, *and* give it unto him to whom it appertaineth in the day of his treſpaſs-offering.

6 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemiſh out of the flock, with thy eſtimation for a treſpaſs-offering, unto the prieſt.

7 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it ſhall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done, in treſpaſſing therein.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

9 Command Aaron and his ſons, ſaying, This *is* the law of the burnt-offering: (it *is* the burnt-offering, becauſe of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar ſhall be burning in it;)

10 And the prieſt ſhall put on his linen

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The law of God is ſo exceedingly broad, the occaſions of ſin in this wicked world are ſo numerous, and we are ſo propenſe to evil, that we have need to fear always, and to pray always that we may be preſerved; to look before us every ſtep in ſuch a perilous path; and to keep a guard on all our ſenſes, members, and faculties, eſpecially on our tongues, which are ſo unruly and miſchievous, and the occaſions of ſo much iniquity. With a tender conſcience, and "the heart of fleſh," we ſhall ſeldom ſo tranſact buſineſs, form engagements, ſpend time in company, or even alone, or in God's ordinances, without finding ſomewhat upon recollection which will grieve and humble us: and the true Chriſtian is daily pleading guilty before God, and ſeeking forgiveneſs through the blood of Chriſt, on the account of much better ſervices, than others boaſt of and truſt in as meritorious.—In infinite condeſcenſion the Goſpel ſalvation is ſo free, that the pooreſt penitent is not excluded; and ſo full, that the moſt burdened conſcience finds complete relief from it: yet therein is the evil of ſin ſo diſplayed, as to fill every pardoned ſinner with abhorrence and dread of it; ſeeing that not the leaſt tranſgreſſion can be forgiven, but through the agonizing death of the great Emmanuel. Such perſons will therefore walk circumſpectly, and be frequently examining their hearts and lives; and when they but ſuſpect evil, they will have recourſe to the one great atonement. They will be careful to bear no falſe witneſs, nor withhold any required information; to avoid raſh oaths, and careleſſneſs in performance; and to render to God, to the King, and to every one, their due: and ſhould they after all diſcover that they have failed, they will ſcrupulouſly make ample reſtitution to their utmoſt ability, acknowledge their fault without extenuation, and ſeek forgiveneſs both of God and of the injured party.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2—7.] This law relates to ſuch perſons, as had been guilty of diſhoneſty, and had not been detected, but were impelled by their own conſciences to acknowledge their guilt, to make reſtitution, and to ſeek forgiveneſs from God and from the injured party. In this caſe the prieſt was directed to eſtimate the amount of the injury, and to proportion the reſtitution accordingly: and beſides the reparation to man, a treſpaſs-offering was to be offered to the Lord; to teach the people that the malignity even of thoſe crimes, which are injurious to man, chiefly conſiſts in the rebellion againſt God contained in them; and that repentance and works meet for repentance, though needful in order to forgiveneſs, could not atone for ſin, which can only be expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and pardoned through faith in his name.

garment,

garment, and his linen breeches ſhall he put upon his fleſh, and take up the aſhes which the fire hath conſumed, with the burnt-offering on the altar, and he ſhall put them beſide the altar.

11 And he ſhall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the aſhes without the camp unto a clean place.

12 And the fire upon the altar ſhall be burning in it, it ſhall not be put out: and the prieſt ſhall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it, and he ſhall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings.

13 The fire ſhall ever be burning upon the altar: it ſhall never go out.

14 And this *is* the law of the meat-offering: the ſons of Aaron ſhall offer it before the LORD, before the altar.

15 And he ſhall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincenſe which *is* upon the meat-offering, and ſhall burn *it* upon the altar, *for* a ſweet ſavour, *even* the memorial of it unto the LORD.

16 And the remainder thereof ſhall Aaron and his ſons eat: with unleavened bread ſhall it be eaten in the holy place: in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they ſhall eat it.

17 It ſhall not be baken with leaven: I have given it *unto them for* their portion of my offerings made by fire; it *is* moſt holy, as *is* the ſin-offering, and as the treſpaſs offering.

18 All the males among the children of Aaron ſhall eat of it: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: Every one that toucheth them ſhall be holy.

19 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

20 This *is* the offering of Aaron, and of his ſons, which they ſhall offer unto the LORD, in the day when he is anointed: the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night.

21 In a pan it ſhall be made with oil, *and when it is* baken, thou ſhalt bring it in: *and* the baken pieces of the meat-offering ſhalt thou offer *for* a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

22 And the prieſt of his ſons, that is anointed in his ſtead, ſhall offer it: *It is* a ſtatute for ever unto the LORD, it ſhall be wholly burnt.

23 For every meat-offering for the prieſt ſhall be wholly burnt: it ſhall not be eaten.

24 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

25 Speak unto Aaron and to his ſons, ſaying, This *is* the law of the ſin-offering: in the place where the burnt-offering is killed, ſhall the ſin-offering be killed before the LORD: it *is* moſt holy.

26 The prieſt that offereth it for ſin, ſhall eat it: in the holy place ſhall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

27 What-

V. 19—23.] The high-prieſt was required to offer this meat-offering every morning and evening perpetually; the whole of which was burnt upon the altar of burnt-offering, and none of it eaten by him, or by any of the other prieſts. The prieſts were all types of Chriſt: and it is generally ſuppoſed that their eating of the ſin-offering referred to this typical character, and denoted their bearing and expiating the ſins of the people: but they could only do this *typically*; and therefore, in reſpect of their own ſacrifices and ſome others, they were to eat none of them, but to burn all; which was a tranſlation of the whole guilt of themſelves and of the people to Chriſt and his ſacrifice, who actually bore and expiated the whole. This meat-offering might alſo repreſent, that the beſt duties and ſervices, even of the high-prieſt himſelf, could only be accepted through the ſacrifice of Chriſt; ſo far would they be from *actually* taking away the ſins of others: and that he and his brethren muſt nevertheleſs daily abound in good works, and in perſonal religion in the moſt devoted and diſintereſted manner.

V. 25—30.] The *moſt holy oblations* were entirely ſeparated from common uſes, and devoted to God as a typical ſatisfaction for ſin. All theſe regulations were calculated to expreſs the polluting nature of ſin, and the tranſlation of guilt from the ſinner to the ſacrifice, yet ſo, that it was not actually taken away, but in ſome ſenſe adhered to them: and they denoted that ſomewhat more effectual was repreſented by them.—They might alſo intimate, that none muſt pretend to any ſhare with Chriſt in atoning for ſin; that none but the *ſpiritual* prieſthood, which is ſeparated from the world and ſin, and truly devoted to God, have any real benefit from the ſacrifice of

27 Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place.

28 But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden, shall be broken: and if it be sodden in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water.

29 All the males among the priests shall eat thereof; it *is* most holy.

30 And no sin-offering, whereof *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile *withal* in the holy *place*, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.

CHAP. VII.

Contains the law of the priests, 1st. Concerning the trespass-offering, v. 1—10. 2d. Concerning the peace-offering, v. 11—34. 3d. The whole summed up in the close, v. 35—38.

LIKEWISE this *is* the law of the trespass-offering: it *is* most holy.

2 In the place where they kill the burnt-offering,

Christ, or truly feed upon him in their hearts; but that his atonement becomes to many others an occasion of additional guilt and deeper condemnation, through their contempt, neglect, or abuse of it.—The most holy things were required to be eaten in the court of the tabernacle, by the priests, or their sons, who by birth were heirs to the priesthood, though, being under age, or through some infirmity, they were debarred from officiating: for the youngest Christian, or the most infirm believer, is as much interested in the sacrifice of Christ, and as certainly has the benefit of it, as the oldest and strongest; though he may not be honoured with such usefulness. The other oblations were a provision for the families of the priests in their own houses. (*Notes, &c. IV.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is almost impossible to enumerate the various methods, by which covetousness hath contrived to violate the law of love in respect of our neighbour's property. Human laws must indeed discriminate in their punishments with reference to the welfare of the community: but all these methods of injustice are *alike* a violation of the divine law, (not excepting the case of keeping what is found, when the owner can be ascertained;) and they are generally accompanied with lies, and frequently with perjury.—Would the offender, therefore, escape the vengeance of God (though he be not exposed to punishment from man), he must both make ample restitution, if in his power, and seek forgiveness by faith in that one offering which taketh away the sin of the world.—Confession of sin makes no satisfaction to justice; and our municipal laws, therefore, do not require the offender to plead guilty, or to criminate himself, nor will it avail for the mitigation of his sentence.—But before the mercy-seat of God the case is somewhat different: he, who ingenuously confesses his sin, who pleads guilty and condemns himself, is the only person who obtains the benefit of Christ's satisfaction, the free forgiveness of all sin, and the full comfort of it. Our God approves of such a disposition and conduct as right and reasonable in a sinner: and no one, who is *unfeignedly* of this contrite spirit, will either abuse free mercy, or depend on any thing else for forgiveness, but, the blood of the great Sacrifice for sin; nor will any such person wilfully continue in sin, or fail to bring forth the fruits meet for repentance.

The efficacy of the priesthood and mediation of Christ is perpetual, and we can never approach to God in his name, by day or by night, unseasonably: thus should the fire of our holy affections, the exercise of our faith and love, of prayer and praise, be constant, and without ceasing also; and we should be watchful and unwearied in well-doing.—Especially should the true ministers of Christ ever have the fire of their zeal burning, and their spiritual sacrifices ascending; being instant in season, and out of season, in their important work; without sloth, weariness, or dissipation; with all reverence, and exactness, and not deeming the meanest service beneath them, or admitting of a careless performance.—Such ministers, though they can do nothing to atone for the sin of the people, nay, need continual forgiveness themselves, yet as instruments will be very useful to the bringing men to repent, to seek and find forgiveness, and to become zealous of good works; and they *only* have a well-grounded claim to be maintained from the sanctuary. But they will also be the last persons to be peremptory in their demands of this nature, to be discontented with their provision, or attentive to their own interest or indulgence.—Rather will they make it their study to convince the people that they seek not *theirs* but *them*; that they had rather promote their sanctification, than profit by their sins; and that they desire themselves to be examples to the flock, in practising what they preach, in foregoing their just claims, and in seeking the glory of God and the good of souls, even when their diligence meets with no recompence or a very ungrateful return from man.—Above all they will teach the people, both by word and deed, to shun the defilement of sin, to treat sacred things with serious regard, to reverence the atoning blood of Christ, and, in an holy manner, to apply its benefits, not thence taking encouragement to sin, but deducing powerful motives for devoted obedience unto God. May the Lord send forth many such labourers into his harvest, for the honour of Jesus, the great Head of the Church. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—10.] In the case of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, the whole sacrifice was divided betwixt the altar and the priest; and the offerer had no share in it, as he had in the peace-offerings.

The

offering, ſhall they kill the treſpaſs-offering: and the blood thereof ſhall he ſprinkle round about upon the altar.

3 And he ſhall offer of it, all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards,

4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul *that is* above the liver, with the kidneys, it ſhall he take away.

5 And the prieſt ſhall burn them upon the altar, *for* an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a treſpaſs-offering.

6 Every male among the prieſts ſhall eat thereof: it ſhall be eaten in the holy place: it *is* moſt holy.

7 As the ſin-offering *is*, ſo *is* the treſpaſs-offering: *there is* one law for them: the prieſt that maketh atonement therewith ſhall have *it*.

8 And the prieſt that offereth any man's burnt-offering, *even* the prieſt ſhall have to himſelf the ſkin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered.

9 And all the meat-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dreſſed in the frying-pan, and in the pan, ſhall be the prieſt's that offereth it.

10 And every meat-offering mingled with oil, and dry, ſhall all the ſons of Aaron have, one *as much* as another.

11 And this *is* the law of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings, which he ſhall offer unto the LORD.

12 If he offer it for a thankſgiving, then he ſhall offer with the ſacrifice of thankſgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fryed.

13 Beſides the cakes, he ſhall offer *for* his offering leavened bread, with the ſacrifice of thankſgiving of his peace-offerings.

14 And of it he ſhall offer one out of the whole oblation, *for* an heave-offering unto the LORD, *and* it ſhall be the prieſt's that ſprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings.

15 And the fleſh of the ſacrifice of his peace-offerings for thankſgiving ſhall be eaten the ſame day that it is offered: he ſhall not leave any of it until the morning.

16 But if the ſacrifice of his offering *be* a vow or a voluntary offering, it ſhall be eaten the ſame day that he offereth his ſacrifice: and on the morrow alſo the remainder of it ſhall be eaten:

17 But the remainder of the fleſh of the ſacrifice, on the third day, ſhall be burnt with fire.

18 And if *any* of the fleſh of the ſacrifice of his peace-offering be eaten at all on the third day, it ſhall not be accepted, neither ſhall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it ſhall be an abomination, and the ſoul that eateth of it ſhall bear his iniquity.

19 And the fleſh that toucheth any unclean *thing*, ſhall not be eaten, it ſhall be burnt with fire: and as for the fleſh, all that be clean ſhall eat thereof.

The former was an expreſſion of repentance and ſorrow for ſin, and was therefore more properly accompanied by faſting, than by feaſting; which yet was very ſuitable to the occaſions of the peace-offerings, that denoted communion with a reconciled God in Chriſt, the joy and gratitude of a pardoned ſinner, and the privileges and chearful ſervices of a believer. Nor is the remembrance of ſin ever pleaſant to a true Chriſtian, though the remembrance of God's former kindneſs, and the expectation of, and application for, future benefits, always are. The prieſt, who offered the ſacrifice, in ſome caſes had all that was not burnt for his own perquiſite, which would encourage and recompenſe a conſtant attendance. In other caſes all the prieſts ſhared alike, which might forward friendly intercourſe and fellowſhip with each other. The ſkin belonged to the prieſt who offered the ſacrifice; 'that is,' ſay the Jewiſh writers with conſiderable probability, 'the ſkins of ſacrifices brought 'by individuals; whilſt thoſe of the public ſacrifices were 'ſold, to defray the expences of repairing the taber-'nacle.'

V. 15—18.] In the prohibition of any part of the ſacrifice being kept unto the third day, when it would begin to putrify, there may be a reference to Chriſt, who roſe again in about the ſame time and ſaw no corruption. But more evidently the Iſraelites were hereby cautioned againſt procraſtination in rendering thanks, in paying their vows, or in ſeeking ſpiritual bleſſings; againſt ſuperſtition; and againſt diſtruſt and covetouſneſs. And they were taught to uſe hoſpitality to their friends, and to the poor without grudging: for if they ſpared, they only ſpared for the fire; except they would by diſobedience prevent the acceptance of their ſacrifice, and render it an abomination.

20 But

20 But the ſoul that eateth *of* the fleſh of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings that *pertain* unto the Lord, having his uncleanneſs upon him, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

21 Moreover, the ſoul that ſhall touch any unclean *thing*, *as* the uncleanneſs of man, or *any* unclean beaſt, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the fleſh of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings which *pertain* unto the LORD, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

22 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes ſaying,

23 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Ye ſhall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of ſheep, or of goat.

24 And the fat of the beaſt that dieth of itſelf, and the fat of that which is torn with beaſts, may be uſed in any other uſe: but ye ſhall in no wiſe eat of it.

25 For whoſoever eateth the fat of the beaſt, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the ſoul that eateth *it* ſhall be cut off from his people.

26 Moreover, ye ſhall eat no manner of blood, *whether it be* of fowl or of beaſt, in any of your dwellings.

27 Whatſoever ſoul *it be* that eateth any manner of blood, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

28 And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

29 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, He that offereth the ſacrifice of his peace-offerings unto the LORD, ſhall bring his oblation unto the Lord of the ſacrifice of his peace-offerings.

30 His own hands ſhall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breaſt, it ſhall he bring, that the breaſt may be waved *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

31 And the prieſt ſhall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breaſt ſhall be Aaron's and his ſons.

32 And the right ſhoulder ſhall ye give unto the prieſt *for* an heave-offering, of the ſacrifices of your peace-offerings.

33 He among the ſons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings and the fat, ſhall have the right ſhoulder for *his* part.

34 For the wave-breaſt and the heave-ſhoulder have I taken of the children of Iſrael, from off the ſacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the prieſt, and unto his ſons, by a ſtatute for ever, from among the children of Iſrael.

35 This *is the portion* of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his ſons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day *when* he preſented them to miniſter unto the LORD in the prieſt's office;

36 Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Iſrael, in the day that he anointed them, *by* a ſtatute for ever, throughout their generations.

37 This *is* the law of the burnt-offering, of the meat-offering, and of the ſin-offering, and of the treſpaſs-offering, and of the conſecrations, and of the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings;

38 Which the LORD commanded Moſes in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Iſrael to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

CHAP.

V. 20. *Cut off from his people.*] We do not find any rule or example, which may induce us to ſuppoſe that this was a law which the prieſt or the civil magiſtrate were empowered to execute, either by ſolemn excommunication, or by death. It ſeems rather to have been an aweful denunciation of divine vengeance: ſuch perſons would deſerve, and might expect, to be cut off by ſome immediate judgment of God.

V. 30—34.] The offerer was required with his own hands to bring theſe parts of the ſacrifice to the prieſt, that the oblation of them might appear his own voluntary action. The wave-breaſt and heave-ſhoulder were ſolemnly preſented, lifted up, and waved before the altar, and then given to the prieſt as his portion; which might intimate, that as Chriſt, with his whole heart and all his power, ſerves the intereſt of his Church, ſo ought the prieſt to ſerve God and the congregation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As it hath been obſerved, that true miniſters will readily forego their own intereſt or indulgence, for the glory of God and the good of ſouls: ſo it muſt now be noticed, what

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. The preparation at God's command for the consecration of Aaron and his sons, v. 1—5. 2d. And account of their being washed, arrayed, and anointed, together with the altar, laver, &c. v. 6—13. 3d. The sacrifices offered for them, with the prescribed ceremonies, v. 14—32. 4th. Their consecration continued for seven days, v. 33—36.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread.

3 And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

5 And Moses said unto the congregation, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded to be done.

6 And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.

7 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound *it* unto him therewith.

8 And he put the breast-plate upon him: also he put in the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim.

9 And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, *even* upon his fore-front

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what ample provision God himself made for them; and that in proportion to their diligent attendance upon his courts. Nor have we any reason to judge from the New Testament, that he would now have them doomed to indigence; or that those persons do their duty, who themselves live in plenty, and permit them to continue in perplexing straits: and the more willing any minister is "to "suffer all things, lest he should hinder the Gospel of "Christ," the more inexcusable they are, who allow him to be a loser by such disinterestedness. (1 *Cor.* ix. 11—15.)

Every thing is beautiful in it's season: there is a time, when the Lord calls to weeping and fasting, and a time when thankful joy admits of festivity: indeed godly sorrow for sin, and believing meditation upon the Saviour's bitter sufferings, prepare for feasting upon his spiritual provisions, and rejoicing in his holy comfort. The infinite sufficiency, which is in Christ, furnishes a plenteous feast for all, even the vilest sinners, who accept of his gracious invitations: therefore the true believer longs for all around him, yea for all the world to share with him in his felicity. And the same principle, counteracting his natural selfishness, covetousness, and distrust; and inspiring gratitude and confidence in God, as well as good-will to man, will enlarge his heart to liberality in temporal things, and render him willing to communicate and ready to distribute. Nor is any one a loser by so doing: rather they are losers *indeed*, who are of a contrary spirit; as they lose the blessing of God upon their substance and the comfortable enjoyment of it; together with the acceptance and benefit of their religious services: for, whatever professions may be made of repentance, faith, love, or holy joy; if the heart be leavened with allowed covetousness or malice, or absorbed in selfishness, every religious performance will be deemed an abomination; and the self-deceived wretch, who thus presents it, will be exposed to the aweful woe of bearing his own iniquity.—Delays often cause good purposes and holy affections to evaporate without effect; and we frequently lose the benefit of divine ordinances, by improperly conducting ourselves after them. To approach the throne of grace, or the Lord's table, *unclean* through unrepented sin; or in proud contempt and careless neglect of the cleansing blood of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, is an aweful presumption, and will be terribly punished, except it be repented of: yet on *such services* do multitudes depend to atone for their sins, and to merit everlasting life! And indeed any presumptuous sin, till deeply repented of, must exclude a man from every *well-grounded* expectation of divine favour, and expose him to aweful vengeance. "Let us therefore have grace, whereby we may serve God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a "consuming fire." (*Heb.* xii. 28, 29.)—For the honour of God, and for an example to others, we should in some cases be as explicit as possible in our profession of faith, and in dedicating ourselves, and all we have to the Lord: and we ought at all times to do his will, seek his glory, and serve his people, after the example of Christ, with our whole heart and soul. Thus performing the work that he assigns us, we may thankfully receive the portion which he allots us; and be satisfied that, whatever treatment we meet with from man, he will both graciously supply our wants, and accept of our endeavours; and we may with joyful hope look forward to the period, when he will "present us faultless before the presence of his glory, "with exceeding joy."

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1. *And, &c.*] This consecration of Aaron and his sons was prescribed sometime before, but had been delayed until the tabernacle had been prepared, and the laws of the several sacrifices given. For many things, which are here not commented on, the reader may refer to the notes on *Exod.* xxix.

did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

10 And Moſes took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* therein, and ſanctified them.

11 And he ſprinkled thereof upon the altar ſeven times, and anointed the altar, and all his veſſels, both the laver and his foot, to ſanctify them.

12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to ſanctify him.

13 And Moſes brought Aaron's ſons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

14 And he brought the bullock for the ſin-offering: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the ſin-offering.

15 And he ſlew *it*, and Moſes took the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and ſanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

16 And he took all the fat that *was* upon the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moſes burnt *it* upon the altar.

17 But the bullock and his hide, his fleſh and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

18 And he brought the ram for the burnt-offering: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

19 And he killed *it*, and Moſes ſprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.

20 And he cut the ram into pieces, and Moſes burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat.

21 And he waſhed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moſes burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it *was* a burnt-ſacrifice for a ſweet ſavour, *and* an offering made by fire unto the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

22 And he brought the other ram, the ram of conſecration: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

23 And he ſlew *it*, and Moſes took of the blood of it, and put *it* upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

24 And he brought Aaron's ſons, and Moſes put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moſes ſprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.

25 And he took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that *was* upon the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right ſhoulder.

26 And out of the baſket of unleavened bread, that *was* before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat, and upon the right ſhoulder.

27 And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his ſons' hands, and waved them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

V. 22. *The ram of conſecration.*] The ſin-offering ſhewed that Aaron and his ſons deſerved to have their blood ſhed, and after death to have their ſouls baniſhed from the gracious preſence of the Lord, and to be made a ſacrifice to his offended juſtice; inſtead of being able to bear in their perſons, or atone by their ſacred ſervices for, the ſins of the people; and inſtead of being honoured as *typical* repreſentatives of the Lord to the people, and interceſſors for the people with him; and that they could only be pardoned and accepted through him, who in due time was without the camp to be made a ſin-offering for the people.—The burnt-offering denoted, that through the atonement of Chriſt, they willingly and thankfully dedicated themſelves without reſerve, to be conſecrated unto God for this ſacred miniſtry. The ram of conſecration was their peace-offering; and repreſented that, being now reconciled unto God, they had fellowſhip with him, and delighted in his ſervice, and in being wholly employed therein; that God would now accept, and honour their ſervices and miniſtrations; that they were thankful for paſt and preſent benefits; and confided in, and ſought to him for future ſufficiency and acceptance. Accordingly the ſeveral laws preſcribed in the foregoing chapters were obſerved by Moſes, the officiating prieſt; with only ſuch additions, as had a peculiar reference to their entire ſeparation to God for the work of the prieſthood.

28 And

28 And Moſes took them from off their hands, and burnt *them* on the altar, upon the burnt-offering: they *were* conſecrations for a ſweet ſavour: it *is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

29 And Moſes took the breaſt, and waved it *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: *for* of the ram of conſecration it was Moſes' part; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

30 And Moſes took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which *was* upon the altar, and ſprinkled *it* upon Aaron, *and* upon his garments, and upon his ſons, and upon his ſons' garments with him: and ſanctified Aaron *and* his garments, and his ſons, and his ſons' garments with him.

31 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, and to his ſons, Boil the fleſh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and there eat it with the bread that *is* in the baſket of conſecrations, as I commanded, ſaying, Aaron and his ſons ſhall eat it.

32 And that which remaineth of the fleſh and of the bread, ſhall ye burn with fire.

33 And ye ſhall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation *in* ſeven days, until the days of your conſecration be at an end: for ſeven days ſhall he conſecrate you.

34 As he hath done this day, *ſo* the LORD hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.

35 Therefore ſhall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night ſeven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not: for ſo I am commanded.

36 So Aaron and his ſons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes.

CHAP.

V. 29—32.] Moſes as the prieſt had the breaſt and ſhoulder, and Aaron and his ſons the remainder: and what they did not eat was burnt with fire according to the law of the peace-offerings.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In theſe types we ſee our great High-Prieſt, as ſolemnly appointed, anointed, and inveſted in his ſacred office; and by his own blood, and the influences of his holy Spirit, ſanctifying the ordinances of religion to the benefit of his people, and to the honour of God the Father; who accepts for his ſake of our worſhip, though we are ſinners, and it is *polluted with ſin*. We may alſo rejoice that, though free from ſin himſelf, yet having ſuffered being tempted, he is a merciful and faithful High-Prieſt, full of tender compaſſion to the feeble-minded and tempeſt-toſſed ſoul; and that having finiſhed his conſecration and ſacrifices upon earth, as our *perfected* High-Prieſt, he for ever appears in the preſence of God for us. But when theſe heavenly things were ſhadowed forth in the perſons and prieſthood of men; what care was taken to ſhew that they were not appointed for any worthineſs of ſuch an honour, or capacity for ſuch a ſervice in themſelves! how evidently doth all this manifeſt that they could neither actually benefit the people, nor ſave themſelves! that they could not eſcape the wrath of God, be accepted of him, or appear before him, except through the ſhedding of the blood, and the burning of the bodies, of ſo many innocent, uſeful animals! through repeated waſhings, ſprinklings, and anointings, together with change of garments; and every obſervance, which could mark them in themſelves to be guilty and polluted in the ſight of God, and ſhew that they defiled all they touched! Surely all this was intended to lead the people to expect a nobler prieſthood, better ſacrifices, and a more effectual atonement and interceſſion: and we muſt be blind indeed, yea willingly ignorant, if we do not ſee that it teaches us, that nothing can atone for ſin, or render a ſinner accepted of God, but the righteouſneſs, blood and interceſſion of the holy Jeſus, our great High-Prieſt; which are always accompanied with his ſanctifying grace poured into every believer's heart. Doubtleſs when Aaron offered his ſin-offering, he would remember, with mixed humiliation, admiration, and gratitude, his recent tranſgreſſion in making the golden calf, and the Lord's forgiveneſs of it; and would acknowledge that he deſerved himſelf to have been made a ſacrifice to offended juſtice with thoſe who periſhed, inſtead of being appointed to ſuch an honour. This would teach him lowlineſs of mind, and compaſſion and tenderneſs to other poor ſinners, ſeeing he himſelf was ſo compaſſed with infirmity; and effectually prevent his fancying there was any excellency in him for which he was thus diſtinguiſhed, or any merit in his ſervices, or any ground of preferring of himſelf to others. Thus was boaſting excluded, the whole glory given to God, and a preparation made for Aaron's properly bearing the honour, and performing the duties, of the prieſthood. In like manner doth God prepare his *true miniſters* for their office: he teaches them the knowledge of him and of *themſelves*; he convinces them of their guilt and ſinfulneſs, and brings them to a ſimple dependence on Chriſt for every thing needful for their own ſalvation. Thus they learn to conſider themſelves as no better than the vileſt ſinners; except as the Lord hath made them to differ, by intereſting them in the Redeemer's ſacrifice, waſhing them in his blood, arraying their ſouls in his righteouſneſs, and anointing them with his grace. Whilſt they feed upon his ſpiritual proviſion, and are happy in communion with him; and whilſt their hearts are fraught with love to Chriſt, and compaſſion for poor ſinners, they are prepared, when properly called in his providence, and qualified

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1st. The newly consecrated priests at Moses' command entering upon their office, and by his orders offering sacrifices for themselves and for the people, v. 1—21. 2d. Moses and Aaron blessing the people, the glory of the Lord appearing, fire from before him consuming the sacrifices, with the people's surprise and reverence, v. 22—24.

AND it came to pass on the eighth day, *that* Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel.

2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD.

3 And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering; and a calf, and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt-offering;

4 Also a bullock and a ram for peace-offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat-offering mingled with oil: for to-day the LORD will appear unto you.

5 And they brought *that* which Moses commanded, before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD.

6 And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you.

7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

8 Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, which *was* for himself.

9 And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar.

10 But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul *above* the liver of the sin-offering he burnt upon the altar; as the LORD commanded Moses.

11 And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire, without the camp.

12 And he slew the burnt-offering; and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar.

13 And they presented the burnt-offering unto him, with the pieces thereof, and the head: and he burnt *them* upon the altar.

14 And he did wash the inwards and the legs, and burnt *them* upon the burnt-offering on the altar.

15 And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat which *was* the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first.

16 And he brought the burnt-offering, and offered it according to the manner.

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fied for the work, to give themselves wholly thereunto; and to be constant, persevering, tender, and affectionate therein: and they are made willing to forego all personal considerations, that they may point out the Saviour to perishing sinners, assist the spiritual sacrifices of believers, and be their helpers, to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls.—But indeed all *true* Christians are consecrated to be spiritual priests: and we should seriously ask ourselves, whether we are conscious of such a solemn consecration, as "bought with a price to glorify God, in "body and spirit which are his?" whether we are partakers of this washing, anointing, and arraying in the robes of righteousness and salvation? whether in our daily walk we study to maintain the honour of the priestly character? and whether we abound in spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? If so, we know that boasting is excluded: let us then not despise, or disdain, despair of, or be harsh towards, our fellow-sinners; but remembering what we have done, and how we are saved, let us seek and pray for their salvation too. Yet at last our whole life, after our conversion, is only a week of consecration as God's priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices in his courts above, throughout an eternal sabbath. Let us then improve our present opportunity, wait with patience and perseverance, and chearfully expect this high and everlasting honour.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 2—5.] Thus Aaron, after his consecration must "offer first for his own sins, and afterwards "for those of his people." (*Heb.* vii. 27.) But, as no particular transgression required expiation, and the defilement which cleaves to man's best performances was alone to be remembered, a kid, and not a bullock, was appointed to be the sin-offering.

17 And

17 And he brought the meat-offering, and took an handful thereof, and burnt *it* upon the altar, beſide the burnt ſacrifice of the morning.

18 He ſlew alſo the bullock and the ram, *for* a ſacrifice of peace-offerings which *was* for the people: and Aaron's ſons preſented unto him the blood, (which he ſprinkled upon the altar round about,)

19 And the fat of the bullock, and of the ram the rump, and that which covereth *the inwards*, and the kidneys, and the caul *above* the liver.

20 And they put the fat upon the breaſts, and he burnt the fat upon the altar:

21 And the breaſts and the right ſhoulder Aaron waved *for* a wave-offering, before the LORD; as Moſes commanded.

22 And Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and bleſſed them; and came down from offering of the ſin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and peace-offerings.

23 And Moſes and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and bleſſed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.

24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and conſumed upon the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat: *which* when all the people ſaw, they ſhouted, and fell on their faces.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. The ſin and death of Nadab and Abihu, with Moſes' obſervation on the occaſion, Aaron's ſilence, and their burial, v. 1—5. 2d. Aaron and his ſurviving ſons forbidden to ſhew ſigns of mourning; and to drink wine or other ſtrong drink, when officiating as prieſts, v. 6—11. 3d. Moſes requiring them to proceed with their ſacrifices: a miſtake diſcovered about the ſin-offering; Moſes' reproof, Aaron's excuſe, and Moſes ſatisfied with it, v. 12—20.

AND Nadab and Abihu, the ſons of Aaron, took either of them his cenſer, and

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V. 23. *Went into the tabernacle*, &c.] Probably Moſes on this occaſion gave Aaron directions about officiating within, as before he had without, the tabernacle.—After this they both ſeem to have bleſſed the people, as Aaron had done before: that is, they prayed for them, aſſured them of the divine acceptance of their ſervices, and pronounced a bleſſing upon them from God.

V. 24. *There came a fire*, &c.] This fire came forth from the viſible glory before-mentioned. Probably the former ſacrifices had been conſumed with common fire, and theſe had been placed upon the altar; and whilſt the fire was kindling under them, fire from before the Lord rapidly conſumed the whole. This fire was afterwards long preſerved upon the altar, as it is generally ſuppoſed. —By this token the Lord ſignified his acceptance of the vicarious atonement; as the fire, which repreſented his righteous vengeance, conſumed the ſacrifice and ſpared the ſinners. Thus our ſins being laid upon Chriſt, and divine juſtice having been ſatisfied by his atonement, God's mercy is extended to every true believer.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

After the example of Aaron and his ſons, and of him whom Aaron typified, the miniſters of Chriſt muſt conſider their ordination as "the filling of their hands;" and without delay muſt enter upon their important buſineſs; for he that properly deſires that office, deſires not honour, profit, eaſe, or pleaſure, but "A GOOD WORK:" ſo that, without waiting to receive even the congratulations of his friends, he ſhould ſet about it; and not deem any thing which is honourable to God, or uſeful to the Church, or to one individual, too laborious, too mean, or too diſguſting. Such a miniſter muſt alſo *firſt* take heed to himſelf; and take care that his public miniſtrations do not interrupt his perſonal religion, and the care of his own ſoul.—And all perſons ſhould remember, that the exerciſe of repentance, of faith, of devotedneſs to God, and communion with him in his ordinances, is not merely the work of a few days, at the commencement of a religious profeſſion, but the daily buſineſs of the believer's whole life.—Words can never expreſs the energy, with which theſe multiplied ſacrifices, all at once ſuperſeded by the death of Chriſt, mark the inſufficiency of all other atonements, and the efficacy of his own offering of himſelf; and teach us that our beſt ſervices need waſhing in his blood; and that the guilt of our beſt ſacrifices needs expiating by one more pure and noble than they. Let us then be thankful that we have ſuch an High Prieſt over the houſe of God, who hath no ſin of his own to atone for, and who, by his own oblation of himſelf once offered, hath fully atoned for the ſins of all his people. Having offered his ſacrifice, and being taken down from the croſs, and riſen from the dead, he bleſſed his church before he entered the holy place, to appear in the preſence of God, to make interceſſion for us: and he will ſhortly come again, and with the full conſent of prophets, apoſtles, ſaints, and angels, will make good his benediction in the everlaſting felicity of every true Iſraelite. In the mean time, he will manifeſt himſelf, and ſhew the glory of the Father, to thoſe who wait upon him, though not to the world. —Let us however remember with holy awe, that the ſame agonies of the beloved ſon of God, which aſſure the humble penitent of exemption from the deſerved fiery vengeance of divine juſtice, loudly proclaim

and put fire therein, and put incenſe thereon, and offered ſtrange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

3 Then Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

4 And Moſes called Miſhael and Elzaphan, the ſons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and ſaid unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the ſanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moſes had ſaid.

6 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar his ſons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; leſt you die, and leſt wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole houſe of Iſrael, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled.

7 And ye ſhall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, leſt you

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the danger, and inevitable deſtruction of ſuch as proudly and impenitently neglect, or hypocritically abuſe, ſo great ſalvation: he, who in awful juſtice ſpared not his own Son, will not ſpare them. Finally, let us attend on the means of grace; and, as it were, lay the wood in order, and prepare the ſacrifice, and wait and pray 'till the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt and of fire burn up our corrupt affections, kindle the flame of true devotion, and enable us to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1, 2. *And Nadab and Abihu*, &c.] The golden calf had occaſioned a ſad delay in erecting the tabernacle: and now the ſin of Nadab and Abihu cauſed an awful interruption in the opening of it's ſervice. Next to Moſes and Aaron none ſtood higher, or were more likely to be honourable in Iſrael, than theſe two young men. There is reaſon to think that they were elated with this diſtinction, and under the influence of pride and oſtentation: they had alſo, it is probable, heated themſelves with wine. Being fully conſecrated, and conſidering the burning of incenſe as the moſt honourable part of their office, they were impatient to enter upon it; and at the ſeaſon when the people were proſtrate before the Lord, adoring his manifeſted preſence and glory, they raſhly and preſumptuouſly, without any orders, both at once which was irregular, and with fire taken, not from the altar, but probably from under the peace-offerings, ruſhed into the tabernacle to burn incenſe before the Lord. This evidenced great irreverence and diſobedience, and might have been a very bad precedent to their brethren and ſucceſſors; to prevent which, the Lord was pleaſed to make them an example to the Old Teſtament Church at its firſt forming, by cauſing the fire from his preſence to ſlay them ſuddenly, without conſuming their bodies, or their clothes; as Ananias and Sapphira were ſtruck dead at the firſt eſtabliſhment of the New Teſtament Church.

V. 3. *I will be ſanctified*, &c.] This was the general tenor of all the divine revelations to Iſrael, and might be deduced from them. The way of a ſinner's acceptance, though full of encouragement, and though it be an eſpecial manifeſtation of the mercy and love of God; yet clearly reveals his awful juſtice and holineſs, and ſolemnly and loudly proclaims that he will be approached with reverence in this only way, and in ſincere hatred and abhorrence of all ſin. Yet even under the clearer light of the New Teſtament diſpenſation, but few in compariſon properly underſtand, or are influenced by, theſe things. The Lord hath therefore ſeen good under both diſpenſations to warn men from abuſing his mercy, by terrible threatenings, and awful judgments; and we have reaſon to think, that the death of Nadab and Abihu had a very ſalutary and durable effect, eſpecially upon Aaron and his ſons and their ſucceſſors; for of them eſpecially would the Lord be glorified, and had in honour before the people, that their example might duly influence the reſt.—Though Aaron's heart muſt have been filled with anguiſh and diſmay, yet with ſilent ſubmiſſion he revered the juſtice of the ſtroke. Without doubt this would recall his ſin concerning the golden calf to his remembrance, both for his humiliation, and to excite admiration of the Lord's patience with him.

V. 4, 5.] In carrying the dead bodies out of the camp, the bearers muſt paſs through the midſt of the tents of the people; and would preſent before their eyes an affecting and inſtructive ſpectacle: whilſt they beheld thoſe now ſtruck dead by the juſtice of God for their contempt, whom before they had known to be ſo peculiarly honoured of him; and they muſt conſider it as a ſolemn warning to them all.

V. 6. *Uncover not*, &c.] Aaron and his ſurviving ſons were not allowed to expreſs their inward grief by any cuſtomary external tokens: not only leſt they ſhould ſeem to reflect upon the juſtice and goodneſs of God, and to teach them to aſſert authority over their ſtrongeſt paſſions; but becauſe, in compariſon of God, or where the love of him and zeal for his glory are concerned, the neareſt relations muſt be even deſpiſed, and as it were hated. Nor were they, who had been ſo ſolemnly anointed to this high office, on any perſonal or relative conſideration, to permit their important ſervices to be interrupted; with which the honour of God, and the ſafety of the people were ſo intimately

you die: for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you. And they did according to the word of Moſes.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Aaron, ſaying,

9 Do not drink wine nor ſtrong drink, thou, nor thy ſons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; leſt ye die: *It ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean:

11 And that ye may teach the children of Iſrael all the ſtatutes which the LORD hath ſpoken unto them by the hand of Moſes.

12 And Moſes ſpake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his ſons that were left, Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beſide the altar: for it *is* moſt holy.

13 And ye ſhall eat it in the holy place, becauſe it *is* thy due and thy ſons' due of the ſacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for ſo I am commanded.

14 And the wave-breaſt and heave-ſhoulder ſhall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy ſons, and thy daughters with thee: for *they be* thy due, and thy ſons' due, *which* are given out of the ſacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Iſrael.

15 The heave-ſhoulder, and the wave-breaſt ſhall they bring, with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave *it for* a wave-offering before the LORD, and it ſhall be thine, and thy ſons' with thee, by a ſtatute for ever; as the LORD hath commanded.

16 And Moſes diligently ſought the goat of the ſin-offering, and behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the ſons of Aaron *which were* left *alive*, ſaying,

17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the ſin-offering in the holy place, ſeeing it *is* moſt holy, and *God* hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in, within the holy *place*: ye ſhould indeed have eaten it in the holy *place*, as I commanded.

19 And Aaron ſaid unto Moſes, Behold, this day have they offered their ſin-offering, and their burnt-offering before the LORD; and ſuch things have befallen me: and *if* I had eaten the ſin-offering to-day, ſhould it have been accepted in the ſight of the LORD?

20 And when Moſes heard *that*, he was content.

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intimately connected. Had *they* alſo by diſobedience provoked the Lord to ſlay them, the people would have been left without prieſt or ſacrifice; which is repreſented as equivalent to being left expoſed without remedy to the juſt wrath of God: yet neither on this occaſion, nor at any time afterwards, was another family appointed to ſucceed, in caſe that of Aaron ſhould be extinct!

V. 8—10.] This command ſeems *immediately* to have been given to Aaron, without the intervention of Moſes, to encourage him by ſuch a token of regard: and becauſe the Lord would have it appear as if Moſes inſulted over his affliction, or inſinuated that he had been guilty of intemperance.

V. 16—18.] Though this ſacrifice was a ſin-offering for the congregation; yet as it was a goat and not a bullock, by ſpecial direction as it is probable, the blood was not carried into the ſanctuary, to be put upon the altar of incenſe, or ſprinkled before the mercy-ſeat before the vail: and therefore the fleſh ought not to have been burnt without the camp, or upon the altar; but when they had done eating to have been conſumed in the ſame manner as the fleſh of the ſacrifices was which remained. Whether this was done by inadvertency, or becauſe Aaron drew a wrong concluſion from the ſtate of his mind, does not appear. (iv. 14. Note vi. 19—23.) Sinners are ſaid "to eat of the fruit of their own ways, and to be filled with "their own devices," when they ſuffer the puniſhments which their ſins deſerve. (*Prov.* i, 31). Thus the prieſts, by eating the ſin-offering of the people were repreſented as bearing their iniquity for them; but by burning without the camp the bodies of the ſacrifices, *their own* ſin-offerings, and thoſe, the blood of which was carried into the ſanctuary, it was ſhewn, that they were only types, and that both their own iniquity, and that of the people, muſt be finally transferred to, and fully expiated by, the great Antitype.

V. 19. *Should it have been accepted*, &c.?] Aaron intimated, that he could not have eaten this ſacred feaſt with proper calmneſs and chearfulneſs, as his mind was agitated with ſuch conflicting paſſions: or that he was ſo unworthy that he could not have hoped for the divine acceptance, had he attempted to have done it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. The diſtinction betwixt clean and unclean animals, whether beaſts, fiſhes, fowls, or creeping things; the laws reſpecting eating or not eating them; together with rules reſpecting the uncleanneſs contracted by touching ſome of them, v. 1—43. 2d. The reaſon of theſe laws, &c. v. 44—47.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and to Aaron, ſaying unto them,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Theſe *are* the beaſts which ye ſhall eat, among all the beaſts that *are* on the earth.

3 Whatſoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, *and* cheweth the cud among the beaſts, that ſhall ye eat.

4 Nevertheleſs, theſe ſhall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: *as* the camel, becauſe he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you.

5 And the coney, becauſe he cheweth the cud,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ritual law, though a "ſhadow of good things "to come," "made nothing perfect;" (*Heb.* vii. 19;) and to caution people not to miſtake the ſhadow for the ſubſtance, theſe manifeſt and repeated evidences of its inſufficiency to take away ſin, or avert the wrath of God, were permitted: let us then look unto Jeſus, who hath indeed borne our iniquity, and fully ſatisfied the juſtice of our offended God for the ſins of all his believing people.—Such is the heart of man, that all honours and diſtinctions are dangerous to the perſons diſtinguiſhed; becauſe they naturally enkindle pride and oſtentation: and ſuch is the holineſs of God, that he cannot endure diſobedience in any, and leaſt of all in thoſe who approach the neareſt unto him. We ſhould then ſtand in awe, that we ſin not; and guard againſt hypocriſy, preſumption, and irreverent raſhneſs in the ſervice and worſhip of God: and not only ſhould we fear that unquenchable fire, which is reſerved for the everlaſting puniſhment of his enemies; but thoſe awful rebukes, with which he corrects the contemptuous careleſſneſs of his own people, and which ſometimes follow them even to the grave. But, though all ſhould read this example with ſolemn awe; the Miniſters of God ſhould eſpecially take heed to themſelves, and keep cloſe both to their work and their inſtructions; and ſhould not only fear the doom of the wicked and ſlothful ſervant, but that of theſe prieſts "who offered "ſtrange fire before the Lord;" if they ſeek their own honour or intereſt, follow the imaginations of their own hearts, are influenced by an angry and perſecuting ſpirit, or treat ſacred things with careleſs indifference: for though they eſcape puniſhment in this world, they will not, *thus living and dying*, eſcape the fire which is never quenched.—Above all men, they ſhould "take "heed, that their hearts be not overcharged with ſurfeiting "and drunkenneſs:" they eſpecially need clear heads and ſound judgments, as well as upright hearts; not only that "they themſelves die not;" but that they may "put a "difference between holy and unholy," "and teach the "people all that the Lord hath ſpoken." They are peculiarly required to watch and be ſober, and even to be ſuperior to their very natural affections; that they may not be overcome by any paſſion, but may be examples to others of that ſupreme love of God, which ſubordinates all other regards; and the important work of their miniſtry muſt not be interrupted, leſt wrath alſo come upon the people. Indeed we all ſhould learn to mourn and rejoice, as though we mourned and rejoiced not: for we may be aſſured, that all our comforts muſt be counterbalanced with trials, and all our honours with ſome thorn in the fleſh to humble us: and the remembrance of former ſins may well ſtop our mouths, and produce ſilent ſubmiſſion under our bittereſt ſorrows: "for it is of the Lord's "mercy we are not conſumed;" we have ſtill many unmerited comforts remaining, and encouraging proſpects before us: and even if our inward anguiſh be great, we ſhould learn to ſtifle the riſing murmur, to keep our mouth as with a bridle, and to be careful that we do not reflect upon God. As the Lord will be ſanctified and honoured by all who approach him; we ſhould be careful to profit by theſe examples of his ſeverity, that we ourſelves may not be made examples to others; and the good effect of ſuch awful judgments, both at the time and in after ages, diſcovers not only the wiſdom but the goodneſs of God in them.—But though our improper attendance on religious ordinances may expoſe us to wrath, yet we muſt not therefore neglect them: we may well ſay, "who is "able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?" yet this muſt teach us more carefully to come according to his appointment, and explicitly in the name of our great Advocate. Thus, though ſome perſons, by unworthily receiving the Lord's ſupper, 'have provoked the Lord to plague them 'with divers diſeaſes, and with ſundry kinds of death;' yet we muſt not, on this account, 'neglect that our 'bounden duty, and ſervice:' "but let a man examine "himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread, and drink of "that cup." Nor need a humble communicant, who comes 'not truſting in his own righteouſneſs, but in 'the Lord's mercy,' be diſcouraged; for he knows how to diſtinguiſh between preſumptuous raſhneſs or contemptuous diſobedience, and the involuntary infirmities or unallowed miſtakes of the conſcientious. After his example alſo, though the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt be careful that all be done in the preſcribed manner, and muſt notice whatever is done amiſs; and on ſome occaſions muſt expreſs an holy indignation, and rebuke with all authority: yet they muſt be careful not to confound inadvertencies with intended diſobedience, or to grieve thoſe whom the Lord has wounded:

cud, but divideth not the hoof: he *is* unclean unto you.

6 And the hare, becauſe he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof: he *is* unclean unto you.

7 And the ſwine, though he divideth the hoof, and be cloven-footed; yet he cheweth not the cud: he *is* unclean to you.

8 Of their fleſh ye ſhall not eat, and their carcaſe ye ſhall not touch: they *are* unclean to you.

9 Theſe ſhall ye eat, of all that *are* in the waters: whatſoever hath fins and ſcales in the waters, in the ſeas, and in the rivers; them ſhall ye eat.

10 And all that have not fins nor ſcales in the ſeas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing, which *is* in the waters; they *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

11 They ſhall be even an abomination unto you: ye ſhall not eat of their fleſh, but you ſhall have their carcaſes in abomination.

12 Whatſoever hath no fins nor ſcales in the waters, that *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

13 And theſe *are they which* ye ſhall have in abomination among the fowls, they ſhall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the oſſifrage, and the oſpray,

14 And the vulture, and the kite, after his kind:

15 Every raven after his kind:

16 And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,

17 And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl.

18 And

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wounded; but muſt be willing to make allowances, and to accept of excuſes; and "to reſtore thoſe, who have "been overtaken in a fault, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, "conſidering themſelves, leſt they alſo be tempted." (*Gal.* vi. 1.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 2. *Theſe are the beaſts*, &c.] The diſtinction betwixt clean and unclean animals was known before the flood; though probably it only related to ſacrifices: but at this time very particular laws were enacted reſpecting the people's diet, and the ceremonial uncleanneſſes contracted by touching the carcaſes of the unclean animals. Theſe laws ſeem to have been intended, 1ſt, As a teſt of the people's obedience, like the prohibition to Adam of the tree of knowledge; and to teach them habits of ſelf-denial, and the government of their appetites. 2d. To keep the Iſraelites diſtinct from other nations, both by throwing hindrances in the way of their ſocial intercourſe with them; and by teaching them the diſtinction betwixt clean and unclean, which was applicable to perſons as well as things: and when this diſtinction between Iſrael and other nations was no longer to be obſerved, Peter was inſtructed by a viſion, which had relation to the diſtinction of meats, not to call any man common or unclean. Many alſo of theſe forbidden animals were occaſions of ſuperſtition and idolatry to the Heathens. 3d. They were likewiſe thus taught to make diſtinctions between holy and unholy, in the choice of their companions, and in forming intimate connections. Some ſuggeſt that in theſe laws, and in the propenſities of theſe animals, they were taught what manner of perſons they themſelves ought to be: and indeed, if the pure, uſeful, gentle, patient diſpoſitions of the animals appointed for ſacrifice, were emblematical of the Saviour's character, it is natural to conclude that the preſcription of ſome animals for the diet of the Lord's people, to the excluſion of others, was ſignificant of ſomewhat ſimilar reſpecting *their* character. Some have even thought that the allowance of the ſlaughter of *innocent animals* for the *food of ſinful man*, forms a continued type of the purchaſe and application of the ſalvation of Chriſt, and of our transformation into his image, who is the food of our ſouls. But in all theſe remote alluſions we muſt be ſparing, when we would deſcend to particulars; and I ſhall content myſelf with pointing out a few of the moſt obvious and certain of them.

V. 3. *Whatſoever*, &c.] "*Parting the hoof*" may denote ſeparation from ſin and the world; "*chewing the cud*" aptly repreſents ſerious, pleaſant, habitual meditation upon the truths and precepts of the word of God. Theſe are united in the experience, and character of the true Chriſtian, (*Pſalm* i. 1, 2:) but hypocrites ſhow that they do neither in ſincerity, by evidently attempting to ſeparate between profeſſion and practice; therefore they are as unclean as the avowed infidel or profligate.—The fox, the dog, the lion, the wolf, and ſeveral other quadrupeds, neither chew the cud, nor divide the hoof; the ſwine, the hare, the rabbit, do only the one; therefore they too are unclean. The former are apt emblems of the crafty, the covetous, the cruel, and fierce; the latter of the lewd, the ſenſual, the fearful, and the carnal-minded profeſſor who ſtill burrows in the earth: whilſt the ſheep and ox, and other animals which unite the two, aptly teach us what perſons we ought to be, and with whom we ſhould aſſociate.

V. 9—12.] Such animals as eels and frogs, thoſe called amphibious, and many ſea-monſters were prohibited; but the emblem, if there be any, is very obſcure: ſome of them may repreſent ſuch perſons, as attempt to reconcile in their conduct the ſervice of God and mammon.

V. 13—20.] Here the critics have abundance of work; and if this law were now in force, it would be neceſſary

18 And the ſwan, and the pelican, and the gier-eagle,

19 And the ſtork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

20 All fowls that creep, going upon *all* four, *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

21 Yet theſe may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon *all* four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth:

22 *Even* theſe of them ye may eat: the locuſt after his kind, and the bald locuſt after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the graſhopper after his kind.

23 But all *other* flying creeping things, which have four feet, *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

24 And for theſe ye ſhall be unclean: whoſoever toucheth the carcaſe of them, ſhall be unclean until the even.

25 And whoſoever beareth *ought* of the carcaſe of them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even.

26 *The carcaſes* of every beaſt which divideth the hoof, and *is* not cloven-footed, nor cheweth the cud, *are* unclean unto you: every one that toucheth them ſhall be unclean.

27 And whatſoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beaſts, that goeth on *all* four, thoſe *are* unclean unto you: whoſo toucheth their carcaſe, ſhall be unclean until the even.

28 And he that beareth the carcaſe of them ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they *are* unclean unto you.

29 Theſe alſo *ſhall be* unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weaſel, and the mouſe, and the tortoiſe after his kind,

30 And the ferret, and the chamelion, and the lizard, and the ſnail, and the mole.

31 Theſe *are* unclean to you among all that creep: whoſoever doth touch them, when they be dead, ſhall be unclean until the even.

32 And upon whatſoever *any* of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it ſhall be unclean; whether *it be* any veſſel of wood, or raiment, or ſkin, or ſack, whatſoever veſſel *it be*, wherein *any* work is done, it muſt be put into water, and it ſhall be unclean until the even.

33 And every earthen veſſel whereinto *any* of them falleth, whatſoever *is* in it ſhall be unclean; and ye ſhall break it.

34 Of all meat which may be eaten, *that* on which *ſuch* water cometh, ſhall be unclean: and all drink that may be drunk in every *ſuch* veſſel, ſhall be unclean.

35 And every *thing* whereupon *any part* of their carcaſe falleth, ſhall be unclean; *whether it be* oven, or ranges for pots, they ſhall be broken down: *for* they *are* unclean, and ſhall be unclean unto you.

36 Nevertheleſs, a fountain or pit, *wherein there is* plenty of water, ſhall be clean: but that which toucheth their carcaſe ſhall be unclean.

37 And if *any part* of their carcaſe fall upon any ſowing-ſeed which is to be ſown; it ſhall be clean.

38 But if *any* water be put upon the ſeed, and *any part* of their carcaſe fall thereon; it *ſhall be* unclean unto you.

39 And if any beaſt of which ye may eat,

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to decide upon the meaning of theſe obſcure appellatives: but as it is antiquated it is not ſo much as uſeful. Many of theſe were birds of prey, and others fed very groſsly: ſuch were unclean. Whilſt the harmleſs loving dove, and ſuch as were of a cleanly nature, were allowed for food. The emblem is eaſily applied.

V. 31. *When—dead*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been the general rule: The unclean animals did not render a perſon unclean, who touched them when alive; for many of them were beaſts of burden, as the horſe, aſs, and camel; and numbers of them muſt be touched in order to be deſtroyed. Yet even with this limitation the law would be to us extremely burdenſome: for inſtance, a dead mouſe, or other vermin, falling upon earthen veſſels, ovens, or ranges, would render it neceſſary to deſtroy them. The uncleanneſs contracted was only ceremonial; yet it would often exclude perſons from public ordinances, and occaſion much circumſpection in properly purifying themſelves and their furniture; and a conſtant care and watchfulneſs to avoid contracting pollution. All this repreſented the neceſſity of the "ſanctification of the Spirit unto obe-"dience;" the daily purſuit of true holineſs, in the exerciſe of "repentance towards God, and faith towards our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt;" and habitual watchfulneſs and ſelf-examination.

V. 39. *Ye may eat*, &c.] When unclean animals were killed *in any way*, their carcaſes rendered thoſe unclean who touched them: but the carcaſes of the clean animals polluted only when *they died of themſelves*.

die; he that toucheth the careaſe thereof, ſhall be unclean until the even.

40 And he that eateth of the carcaſe of it, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he alſo that beareth the carcaſe of it, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even.

41 And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth *ſhall be* an abomination: it ſhall not be eaten.

42 Whatſoever goeth upon the belly, and whatſoever goeth upon *all* four, or whatſoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth; them ſhall ye not eat, for they *are* an abomination.

43 Ye ſhall not make yourſelves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither ſhall ye make yourſelves unclean with them, that ye ſhould be defiled thereby.

44 For I *am* the LORD your God: ye ſhall therefore ſanctify yourſelves, and ye ſhall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither ſhall ye defile yourſelves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

45 For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye ſhall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

46 This *is* the law of the beaſts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:

47 To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beaſt that may be eaten, and the beaſt that may not be eaten.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. The law concerning a woman's uncleanneſs by child-birth, v. 1—5. 2d. The law concerning her purification afterwards, v. 6—8.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If a woman have conceived ſeed, and borne a man-child: then ſhe ſhall be unclean ſeven days; according to the days of the ſeparation for her infirmity ſhe ſhall be unclean.

3 And in the eighth day, the fleſh of his foreſkin ſhall be circumciſed.

4 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we enjoy our Chriſtian liberty, and are exempted from burdenſome obſervances, and allowed the uſe of ſo many kinds of wholeſome and palatable food, from which Iſrael was reſtricted; let us not forget to be thankful for ſuch indulgence; and let us conſider that we are bound to ſerve God with joyfulneſs of heart for this abundance of all things: but we muſt be careful not to abuſe our liberty, as an occaſion to the fleſh. Even to this day, "to the unbelieving all things are unclean;" and only clean to thoſe, who receive them with thankſgiving, and to whom they are ſanctified by the word of God and prayer. Such perſons will not be ſlaves to their appetites; but, both in the quality and quantity of what they eat and drink, will conſider what fits them for God's ſervice; and what ſuits their circumſtances, and conſiſts with temperance, juſtice, and charity, that they may do all to the glory of God.—The Lord hath redeemed and called his people, that they may be holy even as he is holy: we muſt therefore come out, and be ſeparate from the world; we muſt renounce the company of the ungodly, and all intimate and needleſs connections with thoſe who are dead in ſin; we muſt be a peculiar people zealous of good works, devoted to, and followers of, God as dear children; conformed to the image of his Son, and aſſociating with his people: and if we would not commit wickedneſs, we muſt watch and pray againſt temptation. Let us alſo remember that in this ſinful world we are contracting, not ceremonial, but moral pollution every day; and except we are continually waſhing in the fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, we can have no fellowſhip with an holy God on earth, or admiſſion into an holy heaven: and that this will be the caſe till the evening of death, when all, who have been thus waſhed ſhall be clean for ever; but they that are found filthy ſhall be filthy ſtill, even to eternity. We ſhould therefore ſpare no pains, nor think much of any expence or ſelf-denial, which we may be called to in the purſuit of holineſs: we ſhould walk very circumſpectly, uſe much ſelf-examination, and be far more careful to diſcover, or to avoid and waſh away, the pollution of ſin, than the Iſraelite would be about his ceremonial uncleanneſs; and we ſhould wait with glad expectation our diſmiſſion from this ſinful world. For though death, being the wages of ſin, be in itſelf pollution, and iſſue in corruption: yet to the believer its ſting is not only removed, but its uncleanneſs deſtroyed; and as a deſirable meſſenger it conveys the child of God home to his Father's holy and bliſsful habitation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 2—5.] For one week the mother of a male child, and for a fortnight the mother of a female, were both ceremonially unclean themſelves, and rendered all

4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days: she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

5 But if she bear a maid-child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation; and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter; she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest;

7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This *is* the law for her that hath borne a male or a female.

8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1st. Rules for distinguishing the plague of leprosy, v. 1—44. 2d. The conduct prescribed to lepers, v. 45, 46. 3d. The leprosy in garments, v. 47—59.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron saying,

2 When a man shall have in the skin of his

all who touched them unclean also: during the remainder of the terms here prescribed, the mother was secluded from eating the passover, peace-offerings, and holy things, and from going to the sanctuary; but communicated no such pollution to others. The time appointed for the female child was double; for by that sex sin first entered: but in Christ this stigma is removed. When the seven days were expired, and the touch of the mother no longer caused pollution, the male child was to be circumcised.—The whole marked the sinfulness of both root and branch: for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? "Not one."

V. 6—8.] For the reasons above mentioned, the sacrifices, appointed on this occasion, were not peace-offerings as betokening gratitude and joy, but a burnt-offering and a sin-offering to make atonement, and to bring sin to remembrance, that it might be repented of and expiated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What could the infinitely wise God intend by all these institutions, but to bring a charge of guilt and pollution against the whole human species? Doubtless this charge is well grounded: and the Lord knowing how prone men are to deny, or forget, their real character and situation, did thus devise to hold up the memorial of them continually before their eyes; and "by line upon line, and pre-"cept upon precept," to teach them this salutary lesson; that man, from his conception in the womb to his grave is an unclean creature; that he contracts guilt, through this defilement, even in the most lawful and necessary actions; and that he propagates the same depraved nature to his offspring: insomuch that, except as the atonement of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit prevent, the original blessing, "increase and multiply," is become to the fallen race a direful curse, and only the communication of sin and misery.—This may teach us habitual humiliation before God, and to rejoice in our domestic comforts with trembling; to walk watchfully; to search out the evil that cleaves to our ordinary actions; and to value, and give diligence to secure, the salvation of the Gospel.—As we are so unworthy of every good, we have the greater reason to be thankful for all our mercies, and to unite the exercise of repentance and faith, with all our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. When, according to the promise, (1 *Tim.* ii. 15.) those women who profess godliness have been preserved in child-birth; though they are exempted from these burdensome ceremonies, they should deem themselves doubly bound to take the earliest proper opportunity of rendering public unfeigned thanks to God for such a mercy: they should acknowledge the justice of God in all the pains and perils which through sin have come upon the sex; and join all with penitent confessions of guilt, renewed application to the blood of Christ for forgiveness, and dedication of themselves unto God through him.—And whilst these sacrifices of praise, for mercies in some sense common to both parents, are offered with united hearts by both: conscious that their infant offspring hath from them derived a depraved nature, and is come into an evil world, how proper it is that with harmonious consent they devote their child unto the Lord; and take comfort from the assurance, that "the covenant is made with them, for their "good, and the good of their children after them!" for in Christ Jesus there is neither male, nor female. Finally, let us bless God, that the Saviour "was made of a wo-"man, made under the law, that he might redeem them "that were under the law, that we might receive the "adoption of sons:" and that also "for our sakes he "became poor, that we through his poverty might be "made rich." (*Luke* i. ii. 21—24. 2 *Cor.* viii. 9. *Gal.* iv. 4, 5.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2—44.] Many things at least respecting this disease were peculiar to the Israelites. The plague

his flesh, a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh *like* the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests.

3 And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and *when* the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight *be* deeper than the skin of his flesh; it *is* a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him and pronounce him unclean.

4 If the bright spot *be* white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight *be* not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up *him that hath* the plague seven days.

5 And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and behold, *if* the plague in his sight be at a stay, *and* the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more.

6 And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and behold, *if* the plague *be* somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin; the priest shall pronounce him clean: it *is but* a scab: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

7 But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing; he shall be seen of the priest again.

8 And *if* the priest see, that behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a leprosy.

9 When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought unto the priest:

10 And the priest shall see *him*: and behold, *if* the rising *be* white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and *there be* quick raw flesh in the rising;

11 It *is* an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up: for he *is* unclean.

12 And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of *him that hath* the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh:

13 Then the priest shall consider: and behold, *if* the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce *him* clean *that hath* the plague: it is all turned white: he *is* clean.

14 But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean.

15 And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean: *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean: it *is* a leprosy.

liar to the Israelites. The plague of leprosy was frequently inflicted by judgment from God (*Numb.* xii. 10. 2 *Kings* v. 27. 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 19—21.;) and it was always a token of his displeasure: nor do we read of any cure for it, but by miracle, or by an immediate interposition of God. The priests were employed to judge when a man had it, and when he was cleansed from it; and great care was required, and much exactness employed, in distinguishing between this plague and ordinary diseases. They who were unclean through it were excluded from the society of the people, as well as from the courts, of the Lord: and when the leprosy was cleansed, the leper was not re-admitted, till after sacrifices and purifications. All this seems to represent the state of a sinner, whose heart is entirely unsanctified, and in whom sin has dominion: whatever his profession may be, he has yet no benefit from the sacrifice for sin, nor is he meet for communion with God, or his people on earth, much less in heaven, until or unless he be cleansed. Much care must be taken by the Ministers of Christ to distinguish betwixt this person's case, and that of those who though upright in heart have many infirmities: and we shall perceive many other things admitting of an apt accommodation, as we proceed.—We cannot fully understand these particular rules, and shall not dwell upon them. In general it has been observed that the hair turned white in the plague, which was one token of leprosy, may denote the case of such persons as are grown hoary in sin, and still continue in it: the plague deeper than the skin, (another token, and opposed to a superficial appearance,) may denote the difference betwixt sins of surprise, and those, which appear to spring from the habitual state of the heart and affections: the spreading of the plague after inspection, describes the case of such as grow worse in sin after convictions and reproofs: the quick raw flesh, or proud flesh, may denote the disposition to self-justification; or boasting of and glorying in sin: the total eruption, which proved that there was no leprosy, may signify, on the other hand, that consciousness of guilt, which produces ingenuous unreserved confession, and is a good evidence that its power is dethroned: and the plague breaking out, after the cure of an old sore, may represent the return of a professor back again to the habitual practice of his old iniquities: whilst the *utter uncleanness* of those, who were leprous in their heads, might shadow forth the dangerous state of those persons, whose ungodly lives are the result of infidel or heretical principles. But it is enough to have hinted these things, without entering into any further discussion of them; as we have plainer rules to direct us than these antiquated laws.

16 Or if the raw fleſh turn again, and be changed into white; he ſhall come unto the prieſt:

17 And the prieſt ſhall ſee him: and behold *if* the plague be turned into white; then the prieſt ſhall pronounce *him* clean *that hath* the plague: he *is* clean.

18 The fleſh alſo, in which, *even* in the ſkin thereof, was a boil, and is healed,

19 And in the place of the boil there be a white riſing, or a bright ſpot white, and ſomewhat reddiſh, and it be ſhewed to the prieſt;

20 And if when the prieſt ſeeth it, behold, it *be* in ſight lower than the ſkin, and the hair thereof be turned white; the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a plague of leproſy broken out of the boil.

21 But if the prieſt look on it, and behold, *there be* no white hairs therein, and *if* it be not lower than the ſkin, but *be* ſomewhat dark; then the prieſt ſhall ſhut him up ſeven days.

22 And if it ſpread much abroad in the ſkin, then the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean; it *is* a plague.

23 But if the bright ſpot ſtay in his place, *and* ſpread not, it *is* a burning boil; and the prieſt ſhall pronounce him clean.

24 Or if there be *any* fleſh, in the ſkin whereof *there is* a hot burning, and the quick *fleſh* that burneth have a white bright ſpot, ſomewhat reddiſh or white;

25 Then the prieſt ſhall look upon it: and behold, *if* the hair in the bright ſpot be turned white, and it *be in* ſight deeper than the ſkin; it *is* a leproſy broken out of the burning: wherefore the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean: it *is* the plague of leproſy.

26 But if the prieſt look on it, and behold, *there be* no white hair on the bright ſpot, and it *be* no lower than the *other* ſkin, but *be* ſomewhat dark; then the prieſt ſhall ſhut him up ſeven days.

27 And the prieſt ſhall look upon him the ſeventh day; *and* if it be ſpread much abroad in the ſkin, then the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean: it *is* the plague of leproſy.

28 And if the bright ſpot ſtay in his place, *and* ſpread not in the ſkin, but it *be* ſomewhat dark; it *is* a riſing of the burning, and the prieſt ſhall pronounce him clean; for it *is* an inflammation of the burning.

29 If a man or woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard;

30 Then the prieſt ſhall ſee the plague: and behold, it it *be* in ſight deeper than the ſkin, and *there be* in it a yellow thin hair; then the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a dry ſcall, *even* a leproſy upon the head or beard.

31 And if the prieſt look on the plague of the ſcall, and behold, it *be* not in ſight deeper than the ſkin, and *that there is* no black hair in it; then the prieſt ſhall ſhut up *him that hath* the plague of the ſcall, ſeven days.

32 And in the ſeventh day the prieſt ſhall look on the plague: and behold, *if* the ſcall ſpread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the ſcall *be* not in ſight deeper than the ſkin;

33 He ſhall be ſhaven, but the ſcall ſhall he not ſhave: and the prieſt ſhall ſhut up *him that hath* the ſcall ſeven days more.

34 And the ſeventh day the prieſt ſhall look on the ſcall: and behold, *if* the ſcall be not ſpread in the ſkin, nor *be* in ſight deeper than the ſkin; then the prieſt ſhall pronounce him clean: and he ſhall waſh his clothes, and be clean.

35 But if the ſcall ſpread much in the ſkin after his cleanſing;

36 Then the prieſt ſhall look on him: and behold, if the ſcall be ſpread in the ſkin, the prieſt ſhall not ſeek for yellow hair; he *is* unclean.

37 But if the ſcall be in his ſight at a ſtay, and *that* there is black hair grown up therein; the ſcall is healed, he *is* clean: and the prieſt ſhall pronounce him clean.

38 If a man alſo, or a woman have in the ſkin of their fleſh, bright ſpots, *even* white bright ſpots;

39 Then the prieſt ſhall look: and behold, *if* the bright ſpots in the ſkin of their fleſh *be* darkiſh white; it *is* a freckled ſpot *that* groweth in the ſkin; he *is* clean.

40 And

40 And the man whoſe hair is fallen off his head, he *is* bald: *yet is* he clean.

41 And he that hath his hair fallen off from the part of his head toward his face, he *is* forehead-bald: *yet is* he clean.

42 And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddiſh ſore; it *is* a leproſy ſprung up in his bald head, or his bald forehead.

43 Then the prieſt ſhall look upon it: and behold, *if* the riſing of the ſore *be* white reddiſh in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leproſy appeareth in the ſkin of the fleſh;

44 He *is* a leprous man, he *is* unclean: the prieſt ſhall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague *is* in his head.

45 And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes ſhall be rent, and his head bare, and he ſhall put a covering upon his upper lip, and ſhall cry, Unclean, unclean.

46 All the days wherein the plague *ſhall be* in him, he ſhall be defiled; he *is* unclean: he ſhall dwell alone, without the camp *ſhall* his habitation *be*.

47 The garment alſo that the plague of leproſy *is* in, *whether it be* a woollen garment, or a linen garment,

48 Whether *it be* in the warp, or woof, of linen or of woollen, whether in a ſkin, or in any thing made of ſkin:

49 And if the plague be greeniſh or reddiſh in the garment, or in the ſkin, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of ſkin; it *is* a plague of leproſy, and ſhall be ſhewed unto the prieſt.

50 And the prieſt ſhall look upon the plague, and ſhut up *it that hath* the plague, ſeven days.

51 And he ſhall look on the plague on the ſeventh day: if the plague be ſpread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a ſkin, *or* in any work that is made of ſkin; the plague *is* a fretting leproſy; it *is* unclean.

52 He ſhall therefore burn that garment, whether warp, or woof, in woollen or in linen, or in any thing of ſkin, wherein the plague is: for it *is* a fretting leproſy; it ſhall be burnt in the fire.

53 And if the prieſt ſhall look, and behold, the plague be not ſpread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of ſkin;

54 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they waſh *the thing* wherein the plague *is*, and he ſhall ſhut it up ſeven days more.

55 And the prieſt ſhall look on the plague after that it is waſhed: and behold, *if* the plague have not changed his colour, and the plague be not ſpread; it *is* unclean, thou ſhalt burn it in the fire; it *is* fret inward, *whether* it *be* bare within or without.

56 And if the prieſt look, and behold, the plague *be* ſomewhat dark after the waſhing of it; then he ſhall rend it out of the garment, or out of the ſkin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof.

57 And if it appear ſtill in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of ſkin; it *is* a ſpreading *plague*: thou ſhalt burn that wherein the plague *is*, with fire.

58 And the garment, either warp or woof, or whatſoever thing of ſkin it be, which thou ſhalt waſh, if the plague be departed from them, then it ſhall be waſhed the ſecond time, and ſhall be clean.

59 This

V. 45, 46.] The leproſy would thus be a reproach to a man's character, incapacitate him for buſineſs, ſeclude him from the ſociety even of his neareſt friends, and that of all others, except of lepers like himſelf; and would ſhut him out from God's ſanctuary. Yet under this great affliction he muſt abide by the deciſion of the prieſt, and humble himſelf under the divine rebuke; proclaim his own ſhame, and ſhew peculiar indications of ſelf-abaſement and ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God.—Thus when the word of God condemns a man as an unconverted ſinner, his only wiſe courſe is to condemn himſelf, and renouncing every plea humbly to caſt himſelf upon the mercy of God. For thoſe who cover or conceal their ſins, or harden their hearts againſt convictions, will have their mouths ſtopped, and their excuſes ſilenced by the ſentence of the Judge himſelf at laſt.

V. 47—59.] This ſingular effect of the leproſy, which muſt have been ſupernatural, might be intended to denote the

59 This *is* the law of the plague of leproſy in a garment of woollen or linen, either in the warp or woof, or any thing of ſkins, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Laws for the purification of thoſe, who were cleanſed from leproſy, v. 1—32. 2d. The leproſy in houſes, v. 33—35. 3d. The ſummary concluſion of the whole, v. 54—57.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 This ſhall be the law of the leper, in the day of his cleanſing: He ſhall be brought unto the prieſt:

3 And the prieſt ſhall go forth out of the camp: and the prieſt ſhall look, and behold, *if* the plague of leproſy be healed in the leper;

4 Then ſhall the prieſt command to take for him that is to be cleanſed, two birds alive *and*

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the malignity and defiling nature of ſin, and the neceſſity there is of parting with all occaſions of tranſgreſſion, hating even "the garment ſpotted with the fleſh." Such ſpotted garments are they, however rich and beautiful, which are the incentives of pride and luſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a queſtion of the utmoſt importance, whether ſin be in dominion in our hearts or not? for if it be, we have no intereſt in Chriſt, no ſhare with God's people, no acceptance in God's ordinances, no real communion with him, no inheritance in his kingdom, no meetneſs for that holy habitation: but if ſin be dethroned, though it dwell within, and cauſe much conflict and diſquietude, and even produce many defilements in our conduct and in our beſt ſervices, which call for and produce humiliation before God; yet we are his children, accepted in the Beloved, and have the ſeal of his Spirit in our hearts. We ſhould therefore be willing to give this important matter a fair trial, according to the word of God, uſing the aſſiſtance of his miniſters and other experienced Chriſtians; but above all opening the caſe to our heart-ſearching compaſſionate High Prieſt above. Though we ſhould be jealous of ourſelves, and ſuſpect the worſt; yet we ſhould not deem every infirmity, or occaſional miſconduct an evidence of hypocriſy or unconverſion; but ſhould judge as impartially as we can of ourſelves: duly conſidering on the one hand the imperfect ſtate of Chriſtians in this world; and on the other, duly adverting to the numbers, who think themſelves ſomething, when they are nothing.—But miniſters have need of much knowledge of the Scriptures, and experimental acquaintance with the nature and effects of divine Grace, as well as much caution, attention, and tenderneſs, who are called upon to deal thus with men's conſciences in doubtful caſes; that they may neither deceive ſome, nor diſtreſs others: and they muſt be ſure to do nothing raſhly, or without mature examination. Nor ſhould they, who would know the ſtate of their own ſouls, come haſtily to a deciſion: week after week they ſhould wait upon the Lord, and on the miniſtry of the word; and if they be much ſeparated from the world, and engaged in ſecret inveſtigation of the Scriptures, and prayer, and ſelf-examination, it will greatly conduce to a ſatisfactory ſolution. Even if this queſtion be reſolved, and we are humbly ſatisfied that we are real Chriſtians, we muſt remember that "in many things we "offend all;" and that we have occaſion for continual waſhing in the blood of Chriſt. But when it is plain on ſcriptural grounds that a profeſſor of religion is unconverted and unclean; it is right he ſhould know it, and that others ſhould be warned to withdraw from his polluting ſociety. And how dreadful is the caſe of thoſe whom the deciſions of faithful miniſters, the conduct of true believers, and the expreſs teſtimonies of God's word, concur in declaring unmeet to partake of God's ordinances, and conſequently inadmiſſible into the kingdom of heaven, if they live and die in this ſtate! Even on earth all their poſſeſſions, comforts, and performances are defiled; if they do not contaminate the principles, and conduct of others. Yet ſtill there is hope in this caſe; for by the Goſpel that leproſy is cleanſed, which the law could but diſcover. If then ſuch perſons do at length ſee their guilt and danger, let them come to Chriſt, as he did of old, ſaying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me "clean." But would they hear him ſay, "I will, be thou "clean," they muſt renounce every ſelf-excuſing plea, be willing to part with every ſin, and every occaſion of ſin, ſubmit to his rebukes, attend upon his directions, and give him all the praiſe. Finally, If we have in ſome meaſure experienced his cleanſing power, we ſhall gradually become willing to put off this leprous garment of the body, and leave it to be refined in the grave, that we may be for ever with the Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—3.] As the prieſts could not cleanſe the lepers, no law is given about it: but when the Lord was pleaſed to remove the plague, the following rules were to be obſerved, in re-admitting them to the ordinances of God, and the ſociety of his people. And they very aptly repreſent many of the duties and exerciſes of truly repenting ſinners, as well as the duties of miniſters reſpecting them. It ſeems the prieſts might viſit and even touch the leper, without contracting uncleanneſs: and the ſeaſonable inſtruction they might give them, as well as the aſſiſtance they might afford them in their devotions, would render this a great mercy, and comfort to them under their affliction.

V. 4—7.] The two birds may either ſignify Chriſt ſhedding his blood for ſinners, and then riſing and aſcending into heaven, there to appear in the preſence of God for us: or the bird, that was ſlain may repreſent

and clean, and cedar-wood, and ſcarlet, and byſſop.

5 And the prieſt ſhall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen veſſel over running water.

6 As for the living bird, he ſhall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the ſcarlet, and the hyſſop, and ſhall dip them and the living bird, in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water.

7 And he ſhall ſprinkle upon him that is to be cleanſed from the leproſy, ſeven times, and ſhall pronounce him clean, and ſhall let the living bird looſe into the open field.

8 And he that is to be cleanſed ſhall waſh his clothes, and ſhave off all his hair, and waſh himſelf in water, that he may be clean: and after that he ſhall come into the camp, and ſhall tarry abroad out of his tent ſeven days.

9 But it ſhall be on the ſeventh day, that he ſhall ſhave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eye-brows, even all his hair he ſhall ſhave off: and he ſhall waſh his clothes, alſo he ſhall waſh his fleſh in water, and he ſhall be clean.

10 And on the eighth day he ſhall take two he-lambs without blemiſh, and one ewe-lamb of the firſt year, without blemiſh, and three-tenth deals of fine flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.

11 And the prieſt that maketh *him* clean, ſhall preſent the man that is to be made clean, and thoſe things before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

12 And the prieſt ſhall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a treſpaſs-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *for* a wave-offering, before the LORD.

13 And he ſhall ſlay the lamb in the place where he ſhall kill the ſin-offering, and the burnt-offering, in the holy place: for as the ſin-offering *is* the prieſt's, *ſo is* the treſpaſs-offering: it *is* moſt holy.

14 And the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering, and the prieſt ſhall put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

15 And the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand:

16 And the prieſt ſhall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and ſhall ſprinkle of the oil with his finger, ſeven times before the LORD.

17 And of the reſt of the oil that *is* in his hand, ſhall the prieſt put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the treſpaſs-offering.

18 And

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repreſent the Saviour dying for our ſins; and the living bird, the ſinner preſerved and liberated, by being waſhed in his atoning blood, and the purifying grace of his Spirit; and in conſequence of being thus delivered from the wrath of God and the bondage of Satan, "ſeeking thoſe things "which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand "of God." *The cedar-wood*, an emblem of the ſoundneſs of the cleanſed leper's fleſh, may denote the ſincerity of the true convert's heart, and the incorruptible nature of true grace: the *ſcarlet*, which was oppoſed to the ſnowy whiteneſs of the leproſy, and implied that the man was recovered to his former ruddy complexion, might repreſent the true penitent as come to himſelf, and to his right mind: *the byſſop*, an inſignificant ſhrub commonly uſed in the legal ſprinklings, might ſignify faith, of ſmall eſtimation among men, but of great efficacy in applying the ſalvation of Chriſt to the ſoul; or that mean inſtruments may be uſeful in directing ſinners to Chriſt. (*Pſalm* li. 7.) All theſe were to be dipped in the blood and water: for all our ſincerity, repentance, and faith, are derived from that living purifying water, the Holy Ghoſt; and are only acceptable through the blood of the Saviour.

V. 8, 9.] Thus the true penitent, having in private conference with the miniſters of Chriſt, and in the ſecret exerciſes of faith and prayer, got ſome comfortable hope of acceptance in the beloved, proceeds to put away all the remainder of his ſins, and ſeriouſly to prepare himſelf for a more ſolemn profeſſion of his faith, in the public ordinances of the Goſpel: for all this was done by the leper "*without the camp.*"

V. 10—18.] The preparation being made, the cleanſed leper before the congregation in the court of the tabernacle, by the appointed ſacrifices, made profeſſion of his repentance, faith, and devotedneſs to God; and thus both

18 And the remnant of the oil that *is* in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the LORD.

19 And the prieſt ſhall offer the ſin-offering and make an atonement for him that is to be cleanſed from his uncleanneſs, and afterward he ſhall kill the burnt-offering.

20 And the prieſt ſhall offer the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering, upon the altar: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, and he ſhall be clean.

21 And if he *be* poor, and cannot get ſo much; then he ſhall take one lamb *for* a treſpaſs-offering, to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one-tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering, and a log of oil:

22 And two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, ſuch as he is able to get; and the one ſhall be a ſin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering.

23 And he ſhall bring them on the eighth day, for his cleanſing, unto the prieſt, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD.

24 And the prieſt ſhall take the lamb of the treſpaſs-offering, and the log of oil, and the prieſt ſhall wave them *for* a wave offering, before the LORD.

25 And he ſhall kill the lamb of the treſpaſs-offering, and the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

26 And the prieſt ſhall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand.

27 And the prieſt ſhall ſprinkle with his right finger *ſome* of the oil that *is* in his left hand, ſeven times before the LORD.

28 And the prieſt ſhall put of the oil that *is* in his hand, upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering.

29 And the reſt of the oil that *is* in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall put upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD.

30 And he ſhall offer the one of the turtle-doves, or of the young pigeons, ſuch as he can get;

31 *Even* ſuch as he is able to get, the one *for* a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him that is to be cleanſed, before the LORD.

32 This *is* the law *of him* in whom *is* the plague of leproſy, whoſe hand is not able to get *that which pertaineth* to his cleanſing.

33 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, ſaying,

34 When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a poſſeſſion, and

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both expreſſed his gratitude, and joined himſelf to the Lord's people. In like manner, our profeſſion at the Lord's table ſhould be the counterpart of what has ſecretly paſſed between God and our ſouls; and the private exerciſe of repentance and faith ſhould always be followed by this public and appointed profeſſion; in preparing for which, the counſel and approbation of the pious and experienced miniſters of Chriſt may be very uſeful.—Several of theſe ceremonies were the ſame as thoſe uſed in the conſecration of a prieſt, which might teach *them* a ſalutary but humiliating leſſon, (viii. 23, 24.) The purification of a cleanſed leper was like the conſecration of a prieſt; the conſecration of a prieſt as the purification of a leper.—Every truly penitent believer is a ſpiritual prieſt; and no prieſt, the Saviour alone excepted, was ever more or better than an unclean ſinner, waſhed in the blood of Chriſt and ſanctified by his Spirit.—Thus ſin being waſhed away from the powers of the ſoul, and the members of the body, the whole man becomes devoted to the ſervice of God.

V. 32. *Whoſe hand is not able*, &c.] Poverty would excuſe from expenſive ſacrifices, but not from ſuch as the poor man could procure. The Goſpel is graciouſly accommodated to our loſt condition; but excuſes not impenitence, unbelief, ſloth, or careleſſneſs.

V. 34—53.] This extraordinary plague was entirely a viſitation from God; repreſenting the prevalence of ſin in families, churches, and nations: and it very aptly deſcribes the ſtate of Iſrael, when the leproſy of idolatry had ſo infected the whole nation, that as unclean it muſt be demoliſhed, and carried captive to Babylon.—The rules

and I put the plague of leproſy in a houſe of the land of your poſſeſſion,

35 And he that owneth the houſe ſhall come and tell the prieſt, ſaying, it ſeemeth to me *there is* as it were a plague in the houſe:

36 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they empty the houſe, before the prieſt go *into it* to ſee the plague, that all that *is* in the houſe be not made unclean: and afterward the prieſt ſhall go in to ſee the houſe.

37 And he ſhall look on the plague, and behold, *if* the plague *be* in the walls of the houſe, with hollow ſtrakes, greeniſh or reddiſh, which in ſight *are* lower than the wall;

38 Then the prieſt ſhall go out of the houſe to the door of the houſe, and ſhut up the houſe ſeven days.

39 And the prieſt ſhall come again the ſeventh day, and ſhall look: and behold *if* the plague be ſpread in the walls of the houſe:

40 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they take away the ſtones, in which the plague *is*, and they ſhall caſt them into an unclean place without the city.

41 And he ſhall cauſe the houſe to be ſcraped within round about, and they ſhall pour out the duſt that they ſcrape off without the city, into an unclean place.

42 And they ſhall take other ſtones, and put *them* in the place of thoſe ſtones: and he ſhall take other morter, and ſhall plaiſter the houſe.

43 And if the plague come again, and break out in the houſe, after that he hath taken away the ſtones, and after he hath ſcraped the houſe, and after it is plaiſtered;

44 Then the prieſt ſhall come and look, and behold, *if* the plague be ſpread in the houſe, it *is* a fretting leproſy in the houſe: it *is* unclean.

45 And he ſhall break down the houſe, the ſtones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the morter of the houſe: and he ſhall carry *them* forth out of the city into an unclean place.

46 Moreover, he that goeth into the houſe all the while that it is ſhut up, ſhall be unclean until the even.

47 And he that lieth in the houſe, ſhall waſh his clothes: and he that eateth in the houſe, ſhall waſh his clothes.

48 And if the prieſt ſhall come in, and look *upon it*, and behold, the plague hath not ſpread in the houſe, after the houſe was plaiſtered: then the prieſt ſhall pronounce the houſe clean, becauſe the plague is healed.

49 And he ſhall take to cleanſe the houſe two birds, and cedar-wood, and ſcarlet, and hyſſop.

50 And he ſhall kill the one of the birds in an earthen veſſel, over running water.

51 And he ſhall take the cedar-wood, and the hyſſop, and the ſcarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the ſlain bird, and in the running water, and ſprinkle the houſe ſeven times.

52 And he ſhall cleanſe the houſe with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyſſop, and with the ſcarlet.

53 But he ſhall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the houſe: and it ſhall be clean.

54 This *is* the law for all manner of plague of leproſy and ſcall,

rules, preſcribed concerning the leproſy in houſes, imply the care, with which they who fear God ſhould proteſt againſt, and ſeparate from, prevailing iniquities; and the attention and pains, which magiſtrates, miniſters, and maſters of families ſhould employ in ſearching out, checking and reſtraining, cenſuring and puniſhing ſin, in preventing its progreſs, and in promoting reformation; as well as the methods, which the Lord takes with nations and churches, before he proceeds to extremities; and the certain, ſhameful, and miſerable deſtruction, which awaits them, when theſe methods prove unſucceſsful; (*Ezek.* xxiv. 13,) and it intimates that the Lord frequently gives men up to that filthineſs, in which they have delighted.—Thus alſo ſin is ſo interwoven with the fabric of the human body, that it muſt be taken down by death: but if previouſly the leproſy of reigning ſin be cleanſed from the ſoul, it will be received into the holy manſions of the bleſſed, and the body alſo will be raiſed incorruptible: otherwiſe both ſoul and body muſt at laſt be carried forth out of the city of God, to that unclean place, prepared for the devil and his angels.

55 And

55 And for the leproſy of a garment, and of an houſe,

56 And for a riſing, and for a ſcab, and for a bright ſpot:

57 To teach when *it is* unclean, and when *it is* clean: this *is* the law of leproſy.

CHAP. XV.

Contains Laws reſpecting the running iſſues, 1ſt. Of men, v. 1—18. 2d. Of women, v. 19—33.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and to Aaron, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When any man hath a running iſſue out of his fleſh, becauſe of his iſſue he *is* unclean.

3 And this ſhall be his uncleanneſs in his iſſue: whether his fleſh run with his iſſue, or his fleſh be ſtopped from his iſſue, it *is* his uncleanneſs.

4 Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the iſſue, is unclean: and every thing whereon he ſitteth, ſhall be unclean.

5 And whoſoever toucheth his bed, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

6 And he that ſitteth on *any* thing whereon he ſat that hath the iſſue, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

7 And he that toucheth the fleſh of him that hath the iſſue, ſhall waſh his clothes,

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When "that God, who is rich in mercy, for his great "love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead "in ſins, hath quickened us" by his grace, (*Eph.* ii. 4, 5,) we ſhall evidence the change by ſincerely repenting of, and forſaking all our former ſins; we ſhall diſcover a right judgment, and diſpoſition of heart, and in uprightneſs become the ſervants of the Lord; but eſpecially we ſhall be led by the miniſtry of the word to ſee the ſuitableneſs and precioufneſs of the atoning blood, and the ſanctifying grace of Jeſus Chriſt; and gladly waſhing in "this foun-"tain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs," ſhall in heart and affection aſcend, whither the riſen Saviour is gone before. They, who are thus delivered from the prevailing power of ſin, will daily be cleanſing themſelves more and more from all remaining "filthineſs of fleſh, and ſpirit, "and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God:" and without needleſs delay they will deem it their duty and privilege, after previous examination and ſerious preparation, to ſeek admiſſion to the communion of the ſaints; that with them, they may publicly profeſs their faith in, and love to, the Saviour, in the ordinances of his appointment. From thenceforth, conſidering themſelves as bought with a price, they will deſire to do all in the name of Chriſt; and through him to glorify God with body and ſpirit, which are his.—This is the true cleanſing of a leper, and his admiſſion into the courts of the Lord's houſe: or the conſecration of an unclean ſinner to the ſpiritual prieſthood. Have we then the inward conſciouſneſs of ſuch a change? and have we thus joined ourſelves to the Lord and to his people? If ſo, let us give God the praiſe, let us humbly remember what we were, let us abound in ſpiritual ſacrifices, according to our ability and opportunity; let us follow more after holineſs; and let us compaſſionate other poor lepers, and deſire, ſeek, and pray for their cleanſing alſo.—All theſe things remind us of the odiouſneſs of ſin, and the abſolute neceſſity of the blood of Chriſt, to render our ſincereſt repentance, and the beſt of our fruits meet for repentance, acceptable before a holy God. They ſhew likewiſe, that all, who are intereſted in the blood, partake of the Spirit, and are devoted to the ſervice, of the Redeemer. They all remind us to watch and pray; to look well to our hearts, and to our houſeholds, and to the Church of God: that in our places we may ſearch, and purge out iniquity, and ſo prevent its prevalency to the deſtruction of thoſe with whom we are connected. Nor is the readineſs of God to pardon the true believer more manifeſt, than his determination to deſtroy impenitent ſinners.—Let us all then take warning, and cry earneſtly to him to cleanſe our ſouls before we die; that we may never come into the place where unclean ſpirits are tormented; but that "when this earthly houſe "of our tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we may have a "building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal "in the heavens." (2 *Cor.* v. 1.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2—18.] We need not enter particularly into the conſideration of theſe laws, the reaſons of which may in ſome degree appear from the "practical obſervations." Some of the caſes mentioned were diſeaſes contracted by licentiouſneſs; others might be the reſult of ſuch things as it is a ſhame to ſpeak of, though done of men in ſecret. Others though natural and healthful, yet occaſioned a ceremonial uncleanneſs and ſeparation, which is throughout the Old Teſtament made the emblem of that ſpiritual pollution which ſeparates ſinners from a holy God: and finally, the diſeaſes, which were only an affliction, and had no immediate connection with perſonal and actual ſin, were all originally the conſequence of the ſinful ſtate of human nature; and therefore they not only excluded the diſeaſed perſons from the ſanctuary, but rendered thoſe unclean who touched them, and were to be followed by ſacrifices and purifications not entirely diſſimilar to thoſe of the cleanſed leper.

and

and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

8 And if he that hath the iſſue ſpit upon him that is clean; then he ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

9 And what ſaddle ſoever he rideth upon, that hath the iſſue, ſhall be unclean.

10 And whoſoever toucheth any thing that was under him, ſhall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth *any of* thoſe things, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

11 And whomſoever he toucheth that hath the iſſue, (and hath not rinſed his hands in water,) he ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

12 And the veſſel of earth, that he toucheth which hath the iſſue, ſhall be broken: and every veſſel of wood ſhall be rinſed in water.

13 And when he that hath an iſſue is cleanſed of his iſſue; then he ſhall number to himſelf ſeven days for his cleanſing, and waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in running water, and ſhall be clean.

14 And on the eighth day he ſhall take to him two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the prieſt.

15 And the prieſt ſhall offer them, the one *for* a ſin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the LORD, for his iſſue.

16 And if any man's ſeed of copulation go out from him, then he ſhall waſh all his fleſh in water, and be unclean until the even.

17 And every garment, and every ſkin whereon is the ſeed of copulation, ſhall be waſhed with water, and be unclean until the even.

18 The woman alſo with whom man ſhall lie with ſeed of copulation, they ſhall *both* bathe *themſelves* in water, and be unclean until the even.

19 And if a woman have an iſſue, *and* her iſſue in her fleſh be blood, ſhe ſhall be put apart ſeven days: and whoſoever toucheth her, ſhall be unclean until the even.

20 And every thing that ſhe lieth upon in her ſeparation, ſhall be unclean: every thing alſo that ſhe ſitteth upon, ſhall be unclean.

21 And whoſoever toucheth her bed, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

22 And whoſoever toucheth any thing that ſhe ſat upon, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

23 And if it *be* on *her* bed, or on any thing whereon ſhe ſitteth, when he toucheth it; he ſhall be unclean until the even.

24 And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he ſhall be unclean ſeven days: and all the bed whereon he lieth ſhall be unclean.

25 And if a woman have an iſſue of her blood many days out of the time of her ſeparation, or if it run beyond the time of her ſeparation; all the days of the iſſue of her uncleanneſs ſhall be as the days of her ſeparation: ſhe *ſhall be* unclean.

26 Every bed whereon ſhe lieth all the days of her iſſue, ſhall be unto her as the bed of her ſeparation: and whatſoever ſhe ſitteth upon ſhall be unclean, as the uncleanneſs of her ſeparation.

27 And whoſoever toucheth thoſe things ſhall be unclean, and ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

28 But if ſhe be cleanſed of her iſſue, then ſhe ſhall number to herſelf ſeven days, and after that ſhe ſhall be clean.

29 And on the eighth day ſhe ſhall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the prieſt, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

V. 24. *And if*, &c.] When this was done in preſumption, it was either to be puniſhed with death, or the offenders might expect to be cut off by the judgment of God: when inadvertently, this purification was to be obſerved. This muſt not be conſidered as a mere ceremonial reſtriction; the nature of the caſe ſhews the contrary: and the violation of this precept muſt be allowed to be one of thoſe abuſes, that pollute the marriage-bed, though otherwiſe undefiled.

30 And the prieſt ſhall offer the one *for* a ſin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for her before the LORD, for the iſſue of her uncleanneſs.

31 Thus ſhall ye ſeparate the children of Iſrael from their uncleanneſs; that they die not in their uncleanneſs, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them.

32 This *is* the law of him that hath an iſſue, and *of* him whoſe ſeed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith:

33 And of her that is ſick of her flowers, and of him that hath an iſſue, of the man and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her which is unclean.

CHAP. XVI.

Preſcribes the obſervances of the great day of atonement, and contains 1ſt. Aaron prohibited from entering at all times into the moſt holy place, v. 1, 2. 2d. The ſacrifices and ſolemnities, with which he was to enter, on that annual occaſion, v. 3—17. 3d. The purification of the altar, v. 18, 19. 4th. The ſending away of the ſcape-goat, the offering of the burnt offerings, the burning of the ſin-offerings, and the purification of the perſons employed, v. 20—28. 5th. The day appointed for this ſolemnity, and the manner in which the people were to obſerve it, v. 29—34.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, after the death of the two ſons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died:

2 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail, before the mercy-ſeat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-ſeat.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have cauſe to be thankful that we now need fear no defilement, but that of ſin; nor have occaſion for any of theſe ceremonial and burdenſome purifications. Yet when we conſider how nearly we are beſet with occaſions of moral uncleanneſs by day and by night, alone and in company, nay ſleeping as well as awake, we may well ſay with David, "who can underſtand his errors? "cleanſe thou me from my ſecret ſins." And theſe laws may remind us that God ſees all thoſe things, which are totally concealed from human eyes, and eſcape the cenſure of mortal men. Being ſuch unholy creatures, and having to do with ſuch an holy God, we muſt for ever have been baniſhed from his preſence, had he not promiſed, "from all their filthineſs will I cleanſe them;" and both provided the fountain for our purification, and appointed the means. In the daily exercife of ſelf-examination, repentance, and faith in the one ſin-offering which Chriſt hath offered; and by daily prayer for his ſanctifying grace, we ſeek and find this purification, and this purity of heart, with which we ſhall be admitted "to ſee God."—Whilſt we obſerve the rule of God's word, and aim at his glory through Jeſus Chriſt, all things become pure to us: but every thing is an occaſion of increaſing and communicating defilement to the impenitent and unbelieving. With ſerious recollection and humble reverence ſhould we approach our holy heart-ſearching God in his ordinances: and in our daily walk be careful to "poſſeſs our veſſels "in ſanctification and honour;" conſulting expediency and avoiding exceſs in things moſt lawful, and being careful not to be brought under the power of any. Many of our diſeaſes may remind us of our perſonal tranſgreſſions; all our infirmities evince that we are ſinners: thence we ſhould learn patience, and take occaſion to humble ourſelves before God; the more earneſtly to ſeek forgiveneſs; and to wait with chearful expectation for the coming of him, "who ſhall change our vile body, that it may "be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to "the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all "things to himſelf." (*Phil.* iii. 20, 21.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1. *After the death*, &c.] The appointment of this annual expiation of his own ſins, with thoſe of his family and nation, would encourage Aaron by the aſſurance of acceptance and continuation in the prieſthood; and inſtruct him and his ſons to avoid Nadab and Abihu's ſin and puniſhment: for they would be perfectly ſafe whilſt they adhered to the rule, and they might by that example be rendered very attentive to it.

V. 2. *That he*, &c.] The ordinary prieſts went into the ſanctuary, where the golden candleſtick and the table of ſhew-bread were placed; and there, *without the vail before the mercy-ſeat*, burnt inceaſe upon the golden altar one at a time: but they went no further. The high prieſt alone went within the vail into the holy of holies, where the ark of the covenant was; and that only on one day in the year; (*Heb.* i. ix. 6—8); and it was at the peril of his life, if at any other time, or in any other manner, he ventured into the preſence of the Lord, of which the cloud of glory above the mercy-ſeat was the ſymbol. The Old Teſtament worſhip was intimately connected with ſenſible objects, which are leſs revered when rendered familiar: but the New Teſtament worſhip is more ſimple, and maintained entirely by faith; and the objects of it will be admired and adored in proportion to the frequency and intenſeneſs, with which we meditate upon them: therefore *they* were commanded to keep their diſtance, *we* are invited to draw near.

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place:* with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering.

4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and *so* put them on.

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering.

6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scape-goat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin-offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness.

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself.

12 And he shall take a censer-full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail.

13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire

V. 3. *Thus shall Aaron*, &c.] We find that a burnt-offering, in addition to those here prescribed, and to the daily sacrifices, was offered; both of which are supposed to have preceded the solemnities appointed in this chapter. (*Numb.* xxix. 7—11.)

V. 4. *He shall wash*, &c.] The high priest's repeated washings might typify Christ's perfect purity; but they were more evidently intended to remind him of his own sinfulness, who needed such repeated ablutions. He performed the services of this day in the clean but mean garments of the ordinary priests, not in his own rich robes: for Christ performed his whole atoning work in his holy human nature; having laid aside his robes of majesty when he assumed the form of a servant.

V. 6. *Shall offer*, &c.] The word *offer* seems in this verse to mean no more than to *present* the bullock before the Lord, with confession of sins, and earnest prayer that it might be accepted as an expiatory sacrifice. Afterwards (11) all requisite preparations being made, the high priest slew the sin-offering for himself and family; and having thus made ready the blood for the ensuing solemnity, he probably left the other priests, to prepare the fat and the flesh to be burnt, according to the law of the sin-offering (*Notes* iv).

V. 8—10.] The language here used, especially the word rendered *the scape-goat*, has occasioned some employment for the critics: but it does not appear, that they have thrown much useful light upon the subject. Probably our translation, though it may have some difficulty in it, is as expressive of the evident meaning of the type, as any other for which it could be changed. The dying goat represented Christ suffering for our sins; the scape-goat, Christ rising to effectuate the purposes of his death, in the actual forgiveness and justification of his believing people. A goat was an animal *clean* by the law, yet not *cleanly* as the sheep in the opinion of man; nay, it is the emblem of a wicked man in the representation of the day of judgment. (*Matt.* xxv. 31, 32.) Thus Christ *seemed* to men a sinner, but was in God's account sinless: and when numbered among transgressors, he died by man's sentence as a malefactor, in God's as a sacrifice.—Two kids of the goats having been provided equally fit for a sin-offering, it was decided by lot, which should be slain, and which escape. A lot is a solemn appeal to God in a doubtful matter relative to practice; as an oath is in testimonies and engagements: and each of them ought to be the last resource, when other methods of decision fail; each should be used as a solemn act of religion, or not at all. And it stands as an unanswerable objection to all lotteries, and games of chance, that they are a profanation of a *religious ordinance*, which is every where spoken of in Scripture, as having been used with the utmost reverence. They are an appeal to God's decision (for "The lot is "cast into the lap, but the whole disposal of it is of the "Lord,") in a matter of covetousness, or of diversion; and form a species of "taking his name in vain," not much unlike rash and profane swearing in trifling conversation, or when men are striking bargains.

V. 12—14.] The high priest, having carried the censer and the incense within the vail, and caused the smoke to ascend before the mercy-seat, (without which he must not appear there on pain of death;) seems to have gone forth and fetched the blood of his own sin-offering, and to have sprinkled it as prescribed; then to have gone forth again, and to have killed the people's sin-offerings, and with the blood thereof to have entered the *third* time: and, as the Jewish writers say, to have left the censer, till he had applied the blood to the altar; and then to have entered the fourth time to fetch it away. But all that the Jewish writers advance, can only shew how they

fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incenſe may cover the mercy-ſeat that *is* upon the teſtimony, that he die not.

14 And he ſhall take of the blood of the bullock, and ſprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy-ſeat eaſtward: and before the mercy-ſeat ſhall he ſprinkle of the blood with his finger ſeven times.

15 Then ſhall he kill the goat of the ſin-offering that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood, as he did with the blood of the bullock, and ſprinkle it upon the mercy-ſeat, and before the mercy-ſeat.

16 And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy *place*, becauſe of the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael, and becauſe of their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins: and ſo ſhall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midſt of their uncleanneſs.

17 And there ſhall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himſelf, and for his houſehold, and for all the congregation of Iſrael.

18 And he ſhall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and ſhall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.

19 And he ſhall ſprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger ſeven times, and cleanſe it, and hallow it from the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael.

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he ſhall bring the live goat:

21 And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and ſhall ſend *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs.

22 And the goat ſhall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited: and he ſhall let go the goat in the wilderneſs.

23 And Aaron ſhall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and ſhall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and ſhall leave them there.

24 And he ſhall waſh his fleſh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himſelf, and for his people.

25 And the fat of the ſin-offering ſhall he burn upon the altar.

26 And he that let go the goat for the ſcape-goat, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

27 And the bullock *for* the ſin-offering, and the goat *for* the ſin-offering, whoſe blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy *place*, ſhall *one* carry forth without the camp, and they ſhall burn in the fire their ſkins, and their fleſh, and their dung.

28 And he that burneth them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward he ſhall come into the camp.

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they underſtood the Scriptures, which relate to the ſubject; and in ſome caſes what variations, and additions to the divine appointments they made, which contribute little to our edification.

V. 16. *An atonement*, &c.] The uncleanneſs of the people, and all their manifold tranſgreſſions, contaminated even the tabernacle that was amongſt them, and all its furniture; ſo that they needed an atonement. Thus the ſinfulneſs of man's heart defiles all his ſervices, the beſt of which need the blood of Chriſt to render them acceptable.

V. 21. *And*, &c.] The high prieſt transferred all the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael, with all their aggravations, unto the ſcape-goat, by confeſſing them over its head, to be with it ſent away into the wilderneſs, never more to be heard of. In the latter days of the Jewiſh Church the high prieſt had his *form of confeſſion*; but God preſcribed none. An attentive obſervance of God's law, and of the people's conduct, with ſuitable previous conſideration, would enable him to do it much more profitably without one.

V. 26. *Shall waſh his clothes*, &c.] To ſhew the defiling nature of ſin, and the inſufficiency of theſe typical expiations, he who led away the ſcape-goat, and he who burnt the ſin-offering, contracted defilement and needed purification.

29 And

29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you.

30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

31 It *shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever.

32 And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments.

33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar: and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

CHAP.

V. 29—31.] The Israelites all over the camp at that time, and all over the land when put in possession of Canaan, were required to spend this day in solemn humiliation before God for their sins, in godly sorrow, in penitent confessions, and in devotional exercises, either in secret, or in their families and assemblies: and for this purpose all other business was laid aside. Fasting is not expressly mentioned, though generally supposed to have been implied.

V. 34. *Once a year.* &c.] Whilst this solemnity was properly attended to, the annual expiation of *national guilt* would prevent the forfeiture of the *national covenant*; though the sacrifices offered on the occasion could not take away sin, as pertaining to the conscience; except as in them by faith the great antitype was discerned (*Heb.* ix. 8—14.) But in idolatrous times it was either utterly neglected, or very carelessly attended to; and when the substance came, all these shadows lost their use and efficacy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

These varied shadows of good things to come lead us into undesigned, and almost unavoidable, repetitions: for it must surely be inexcusable to shut our eyes that we may not see, or seeing to refrain from noting, though repeatedly, these manifold remembrances of sin, as chargeable upon the best of men in their most holy actions; as polluting all things that the sinner touches; and to be atoned for only with blood, yet with nobler blood than that of bulls and goats. Doubtless these are so many demonstrations, that we rightly understand what the New Testament teaches of Christ, when we consider him as the Substance of all these shadows; and his Church the building for which all these scaffoldings were prepared. Here, in a type, we view our great High Priest, our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Saviour from sin. Thus he vailed his glory:—"because the children were partakers "of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part "of the same," (*Heb.* ii. 14,) and appeared in human nature yet free from sin; though he had richer robes of glory and beauty, when angels saw and adored him "in the "form of God," as their Creator and Lord. By the one sacrifice of himself he made an actual atonement for sin on earth; and with the same human nature, and with his own blood, he ascended into heaven, to appear before the Father's mercy-seat, with the incense of his prevailing intercession for his people. In this work none of them (though under him priests unto God) may come near, as if they would pretend to join in his meritorious intercession. Thence with his spiritual presence he meets his assembled disciples, and renders his ordinances sanctifying to them, and acceptable to God; and at the end of the world he will come in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, to complete the grand design.—As in another glass, we see the Saviour in the sin-offering of the goat. In the likeness of sinful flesh, he suffered without the camp, when by the disposal of God he was taken and slain by the hands of wicked men, and when his soul endured intense agonies from the fiery justice of a righteous God: yet in the *scape-goat* we see him rising, and bearing the sins of all true believers into the land of forgetfulness; (*Rom.* viii. 33, 34.) But in how many things do these shadows fail of truly representing the substance? It was very evident "that the way into the holiest was not made ma-"nifest," when the high priest himself must enter so seldom, and so circumspectly, on pain of death. Jesus needed not to offer sacrifice for his own sin; for he was without sin. Though "the Lord caused to meet on him the ini-"quities of us all," yet he thence contracted no pollution, nor needed any purification, having perfectly expiated the whole: and that without such multiplied sacrifices, repeated every year by a succession of priests, which could never take away sins, (*Heb.* x. 11, 12;) for his sacrifice of infinite value sufficed at once. And feebly indeed do the holy places made with hands shadow forth the Heaven of Heavens; or the smoke of fragrant gums for a few hours in a year, his continued and meritorious advocacy. Nor are the benefits which Israel as a nation derived from this annual atonement, or the external privileges thus continued to them, at all comparable to "the "access with boldness to the throne of Grace," the mercy, the peace, the spiritual and everlasting blessings and consolations, which true believers in all ages enjoy through the atonement of the Son of God. Yet let it be

fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incenſe may cover the mercy-ſeat that *is* upon the teſtimony, that he die not.

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29 And

29 And *this* ſhall be a ſtatute for ever unto you: *that* in the ſeventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a ſtranger that ſojourneth among you.

30 For on that day ſhall *the prieſt* make an atonement for you, to cleanſe you, *that* ye may be clean from all your ſins before the LORD.

31 It *ſhall be* a ſabbath of reſt unto you, and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls by a ſtatute for ever.

32 And the prieſt whom he ſhall anoint, and whom he ſhall conſecrate to miniſter in the prieſt's office in his father's ſtead, ſhall make the atonement, and ſhall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments.

33 And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy ſanctuary, and he ſhall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar: and he ſhall make an atonement for the prieſts, and for all the people of the congregation.

34 And this ſhall be an everlaſting ſtatute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Iſrael, for all their ſins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP.

V. 29—31.] The Iſraelites all over the camp at that time, and all over the land when put in poſſeſſion of Canaan, were required to ſpend this day in ſolemn humiliation before God for their ſins, in godly ſorrow, in penitent confeſſions, and in devotional exerciſes, either in ſecret, or in their families and aſſemblies: and for this purpoſe all other buſineſs was laid aſide. Faſting is not expreſsly mentioned, though generally ſuppoſed to have been implied.

V. 34. *Once a year.* &c.] Whilſt this ſolemnity was properly attended to, the annual expiation of *national guilt* would prevent the forfeiture of the *national covenant*; though the ſacrifices offered on the occaſion could not take away ſin, as pertaining to the conſcience; except as in them by faith the great antitype was diſcerned (*Heb.* ix. 8—14.) But in idolatrous times it was either utterly neglected, or very careleſsly attended to; and when the ſubſtance came, all theſe ſhadows loſt their uſe and efficacy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Theſe varied ſhadows of good things to come lead us into undeſigned, and almoſt unavoidable, repetitions: for it muſt ſurely be inexcuſable to ſhut our eyes that we may not ſee, or ſeeing to refrain from noting, though repeatedly, theſe manifold remembrances of ſin, as chargeable upon the beſt of men in their moſt holy actions; as polluting all things that the ſinner touches; and to be atoned for only with blood, yet with nobler blood than that of bulls and goats. Doubtleſs theſe are ſo many demonſtrations, that we rightly underſtand what the New Teſtament teaches of Chriſt, when we conſider him as the Subſtance of all theſe ſhadows; and his Church the building for which all theſe ſcaffoldings were prepared. Here, in a type, we view our great High Prieſt, our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Saviour from ſin. Thus he vailed his glory:—"becauſe the children were partakers "of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part "of the ſame," (*Heb.* ii. 14,) and appeared in human nature yet free from ſin; though he had richer robes of glory and beauty, when angels ſaw and adored him "in the "form of God," as their Creator and Lord. By the one ſacrifice of himſelf he made an actual atonement for ſin on earth; and with the ſame human nature, and with his own blood, he aſcended into heaven, to appear before the Father's mercy-ſeat, with the incenſe of his prevailing interceſſion for his people. In this work none of them (though under him prieſts unto God) may come near, as if they would pretend to join in his meritorious interceſſion. Thence with his ſpiritual preſence he meets his aſſembled diſciples, and renders his ordinances ſanctifying to them, and acceptable to God; and at the end of the world he will come in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, to complete the grand deſign.—As in another glaſs, we ſee the Saviour in the ſin-offering of the goat. In the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, he ſuffered without the camp, when by the diſpoſal of God he was taken and ſlain by the hands of wicked men, and when his ſoul endured intenſe agonies from the fiery juſtice of a righteous God: yet in the *ſcape-goat* we ſee him riſing, and bearing the ſins of all true believers into the land of forgetfulneſs; (*Rom.* viii. 33, 34.) But in how many things do theſe ſhadows fail of truly repreſenting the ſubſtance? It was very evident "that the way into the holieſt was not made ma-"niſeſt," when the high prieſt himſelf muſt enter ſo ſeldom, and ſo circumſpectly, on pain of death. Jeſus needed not to offer ſacrifice for his own ſin; for he was without ſin. Though "the Lord cauſed to meet on him the ini-"quities of us all," yet he thence contracted no pollution, nor needed any purification, having perfectly expiated the whole: and that without ſuch multiplied ſacrifices, repeated every year by a ſucceſſion of prieſts, which could never take away ſins, (*Heb.* x. 11, 12;) for his ſacrifice of infinite value ſufficed at once. And feebly indeed do the holy places made with hands ſhadow forth the Heaven of Heavens; or the ſmoke of fragrant gums for a few hours in a year, his continued and meritorious advocacy. Nor are the benefits which Iſrael as a nation derived from this annual atonement, or the external privileges thus continued to them, at all comparable to "the "acceſs with boldneſs to the throne of Grace," the mercy, the peace, the ſpiritual and everlaſting bleſſings and conſolations, which true believers in all ages enjoy through the atonement of the Son of God. Yet let it be

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. A prohibition of sacrificing elsewhere than at the door of the tabernacle; and of sacrificing unto devils, 1—9. *2d. A prohibition of eating blood, or that which dieth of itself,* 10—16.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying,

3 What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth *it* out of the camp,

4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest, and offer them *for* peace-offerings unto the LORD.

6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it unto the

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remembered that none but humbled souls, who mourn for, confess, forsake, and mortify their sins; who repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, can derive true comfort from these privileges. The proud, the carnal, the impenitent and unbelieving, have but the shadow still; a shadow of their own devising, not of God's appointing. And though Christ needed but once to suffer; yet we need constantly to look to him: and besides our daily exercise of repentance; seasons set apart from time to time to afflict our souls, to humble ourselves before God, and to mortify our sinful desires, are very profitable, and have in all ages met with the approbation of God, and been sanctioned by the example of holy men. Nor will this mar, but purify, our holy joy, and endear the Saviour, and the throne of Grace, and greatly assist us, in so looking unto Jesus, that we may not be weary or faint in our minds, either in doing his will or suffering for his sake.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 3—9.] This rule extended to all the cattle, which were slaughtered, whilst the Israelites were in the wilderness. All of these must be presented before the door of the tabernacle, and offered as peace-offerings; and the blood must be sprinkled, and the fat burned on the altar, by the priest, with the accustomed ceremonies. But when they entered Canaan, it was only continued in respect of the sacrifices, and they might slaughter cattle for food any where. (*Deut.* xii. 15.) By this law honour was put upon God's appointments; and upon the person, priesthood, and sacrifice of Christ: and the idolatry was prevented, which it still seems was practised secretly, in violation of the national covenant, by means of the custom of sacrificing in all parts of the camp. This is called *sacrificing to devils*; for all false worship is a kind of defying those ambitious spirits, as all wickedness is rendering them service; and by both Satan aspires at being the god and prince of this world. Probably the original word translated *devils*, and which is supposed to be derived from the *roughness of a goat*, referred to the images of the false gods, which were often made in that shape. Indeed sacrificing elsewhere than at God's altar was itself a species of idolatry; and a substitution of another object of worship, besides Jehovah, who chose to be distinguished by dwelling (in the symbol of the visible glory) between the cherubims, above the mercy-seat, in the tabernacle.—The whole kingdom of Israel from the days of Jeroboam habitually violated this law: and through the reigns of most of David's successors, the kingdom of Judah was in great measure guilty of the same, "whilst the people still sacrificed upon the high places." In some cases the Lord dispensed with the letter of it, by accepting sacrifices from his prophets, which were offered elsewhere: for the typical import formed the grand intention of the ceremonial law. The worship of God at the tabernacle represented the sinner's approach to God in Christ, and through his mediation: but offering sacrifice elsewhere, was the emblem of a proud contemptuous neglect of that great salvation: (*Heb.* ii. 3. x. 29.) With reference therefore to that signification, this prohibition and sanction were annexed; the disregard to which would be imputed to a man, as if he had shed blood, or committed murder. If the magistrate did not punish him with death,

the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

10 And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you, eat blood.

13 And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten, he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

14 For *it is* the life of all flesh, the blood of it *is* for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it, shall be cut off.

15 And every soul that eateth that which died *of itself*, or that which was torn *with beasts* (whether it *be* one of your own country, or a stranger) he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

16 But if he wash *them* not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Conformity to heathen customs prohibited, and obedience to God's commandments required, 1—5. 2d. Laws restricting marriage amongst relations, 6—18. 3d. Laws against base lusts and idolatries, enforced by the judgments about to be executed on the Canaanites for such practices, 19—30.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I *am* the LORD your God.

3 After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I

God would himself cut him off by his vengeance. Nor was the practice to be tolerated even in strangers.

V. 13. *Cover it, &c.*] This was to teach the people that some great mystery was implied in the atonement of blood; and to create a reverence of it: for the same reason they were forbidden to eat the animals, which died of themselves; because the blood was in them, (15, 16.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should greatly reverence and value all the Lord's appointments, and it is at their peril if men contemn or change them: but the greatest danger lies in neglecting the salvation, which is in Jesus Christ. "In him dwel-"leth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" "He, "that honoureth not him, honoureth not the Father that "sent him:" "And he that gathereth not with him "scattereth." If then his human nature be the true temple, in which God dwells and will be worshipped: "if "his name be Emmanuel:" "if this be the true God, "and eternal life," (1 *John*, v. 20, 21;) may we not add, "Little children keep yourselves from idols?" Surely all, who value their own souls, should look to themselves in an age and nation, where men, *called Christians*, spend their lives in degrading him, whom prophets and apostles

shed their blood to glorify, and "whom all the angels of God worship." For though we may offer our spiritual sacrifices in every place, yet unless we come by Christ as our Way, trust in him as our all-sufficient atonement and almighty Saviour, and worship God in him, our services will be found an abomination, and our hope a delusion. From such temptations of the enemy we should keep at the utmost distance, by a close adherence to the word of God, a constant attendance on his ordinances, and dependence on his grace; who will then preserve us from the snares of our crafty and malicious enemy. — Faith in Christ, and love to him and our brethren, will sanctify even our ordinary meals, and convert them into spiritual sacrifices.—From the latter of these prohibitions, we may learn to adore the mystery of atoning blood with deeper veneration; to use our liberty without cruelty or sensuality; and to renounce the company of those, who are yet dead in sin and the practice of dead works; to watch against the expectation of happiness from dying creatures; to rejoice in the Lord as our portion; and to glorify him as the God of our salvation. But let presumptuous careless sinners tremble; for if God "set his face against them," (10.) he will at length cut them off with terrible vengeance.

bring

bring you, ſhall ye not do: neither ſhall ye walk in their ordinances.

4 Ye ſhall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

5 Ye ſhall therefore keep my ſtatutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he ſhall live in them: I *am* the LORD.

6 None of you ſhall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedneſs: I *am* the LORD.

7 The nakedneſs of thy father, or the nakedneſs of thy mother, ſhalt thou not uncover: ſhe *is* thy mother, thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

8 The nakedneſs of thy father's wife ſhalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's nakedneſs.

9 The nakedneſs of thy ſiſter, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether ſhe be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedneſs thou ſhalt not uncover.

10 The nakedneſs of thy ſon's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, *even* their nakedneſs thou ſhalt not uncover: for their's *is* thine own nakedneſs.

11 The nakedneſs of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, (ſhe *is* thy ſiſter,) thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

12 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy father's ſiſter: ſhe *is* thy father's near kinſwoman.

13 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy mother's ſiſter: for ſhe *is* thy mother's near kinſwoman.

14 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy father's brother, thou ſhalt not approach to his wife: ſhe *is* thine aunt.

15 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy daughter in law: ſhe *is* thy ſon's wife, thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

16 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy brother's wife: it *is* thy brother's nakedneſs.

17 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of a woman and her daughter, neither ſhalt thou take her ſon's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedneſs; *for* they *are* her near kinſwomen: it *is* wickedneſs.

18 Neither ſhalt thou take a wife to her ſiſter, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedneſs, beſides the other, in her life-*time*.

19 Alſo

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 5. *Which if a man do*, &c.] By an upright obedience to the moral precepts, and a believing attendance on the appointed ordinances, of God's law, his favour and eternal life might be expected; though not as a *merited* recompence. But probably the Lord intended to warn the Iſraelites of the danger, not only of incurring condemnation by neglecting theſe commandments; but of reſting in their imperfect obedience, inſtead of looking through them "to Chriſt, as the end "of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that be-"lieveth." Aſſuredly Paul twice quotes this text as deſcriptive of the righteouſneſs of the law, in contradiſtinction to the righteouſneſs of faith: (*Rom.* x. 5. *Gal.* iii. 12.)

V. 6—17.] As theſe laws forbad marriage betwixt near relations; they alſo prohibited all unchaſtity betwixt them, and every approach to it. The marriage of parents and children, or grand-children, &c. in all the variations here ſpoken of, has ſomething in it at firſt glance unnatural; and would be deſtructive of all that authority and ſubordination, which are of ſuch importance to ſociety. In the marriages of nephews with aunts, ſomewhat of the ſame kind may be perceived: and it is obſervable that the marriage of uncles with their nieces is not prohibited; though from the ſuppoſed parity of the caſe, it be included in our laws. The only collateral relations, which are forbidden to marry, are brothers and ſiſters, by whole or half blood, or affinity. The caſe is different here: the firſt marriages of Adam's poſterity muſt have been of brothers and ſiſters; and therefore we cannot pronounce them *immoral* in themſelves. But as human nature *now* is, it is very expedient that thoſe, who are ſo much together in youth, ſhould by ſuch a reſtriction be taught to look upon all intercourſe as prohibited and inceſtuous; which muſt aſſiſt in keeping out temptations to evil. It is moreover deſirable, that by intermarriages relationſhip and its endearments, and benevolences ſhould be diffuſed; and an unſocial ſeparation of families prevented; which is the tendency of theſe laws. They are therefore to be conſidered either as moral in themſelves, or ſo nearly connected with other moral obligations, as to be proper to be obſerved by all mankind; and in general the wiſer Heathens have deemed ſuch marriages unlawful, and abſtained from them. (1 *Cor.* v. 1.)

V. 16. *Of thy brother's wife*, &c.] Except in the caſe of the brother dying without iſſue. As this was peculiar to the Jewiſh laws, the reſtriction is general to us.

V. 18. *A wife to her ſiſter*, &c.] This is variouſly interpreted: ſome conſider it as a prohibition of polygamy: others argue that it implies an allowance of it; and only prohibits

19 Alſo thou ſhalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedneſs, as long as ſhe is put apart for her uncleanneſs.

20 Moreover, thou ſhalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyſelf with her.

21 And thou ſhalt not let any of thy ſeed paſs through *the fire* to Molech, neither ſhalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

22 Thou ſhalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination.

23 Neither ſhalt thou lie with any beaſt to defile thyſelf therewith: neither ſhall any woman ſtand before a beaſt to lie down thereto: it *is* confuſion.

24 Defile not you yourſelves in any of theſe things: for in all theſe the nations are defiled which I caſt out before you.

25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do viſit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itſelf vomiteth out her inhabitants.

26 Ye ſhall therefore keep my ſtatutes and my judgments, and ſhall not commit *any* of theſe abominations; *neither* any of your own nation, nor any ſtranger that ſojourneth among you;

27 (For all theſe abominations have the men of the land done, which *were* before you, and the land is defiled;)

28 That the land ſpue not you out alſo, when ye defile it, as it ſpued out the nations that *were* before you.

29 For whoſoever ſhall commit any of theſe abominations, even the ſouls that commit *them*, ſhall be cut off from among their people.

30 Therefore ſhall ye keep mine ordinance, that *ye* commit not *any one* of theſe abominable cuſtoms, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourſelves therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1ſt. A general requiſition of holineſs, v. 1, 2. 2d. Miſcellaneous moral and ceremonial laws, as rules or means of holineſs; moſt of which are either repetitions or explanations of precepts before given, eſpecially of the ten commandments; and cannot with brevity be claſſed under diſtinct heads, 3—37.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak

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prohibits a man from marrying two ſiſters, as Jacob had done, to the diſquiet of himſelf and his family: and again, others ſuppoſe that it prohibits the marrying of the ſiſter of a former wife, even after her death. But as the argument againſt polygamy, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, is not affected by its exiſtence being ſuppoſed in the Old Teſtament laws: and as it is generally determined, with propriety enough, that a man ſhould not marry the ſiſter of his deceaſed wife, any more than a woman the brother of her deceaſed huſband: ſo the ſolution ſeems to be of more difficulty than importance. Other reſtrictions of marriage, which pride, covetouſneſs, or falſe policy have deviſed, have not proved for the benefit of mankind.

V. 21. *Paſs through the fire to Molech.*] By this cruel ordinance, which will hereafter be ſpoken of, the worſhippers dedicated their offspring to this pretended deity, and ſuppoſed that they placed the whole family under his protection.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would obey God's commands, we muſt break off old cuſtoms, and renounce conformity to the world: for wherever we go, we ſhall find its maxims and obſervances in many things directly oppoſite to the divine law: yet are they enforced with an authority which rivals his; and are diſobeyed with great difficulty, and at the expence of enduring much contempt and reproach. But the broad, ſmooth, frequented paths of the world lead to deſtruction; the ways of God to life eternal: every one of his commandments are alſo good in themſelves, and conducive to the peace, comfort, and true honour of the human ſpecies; and he is as kind in what he prohibits, as in what he allows. He formed mankind for ſocial life, created them male and female, inſtituted marriage, and bleſſed it; he hath formed the regulations of it in wiſdom and love for the good of individuals, of families, and of ſociety; of the preſent, and of the ſucceeding generations. Where his laws are obſerved, the moſt important advantages ariſe from the intercourſe of the ſexes: where they are diſregarded, diſgrace, diſeaſe, and every evil thing enſue. But what a ſink of iniquity is the human heart, that it ſhould be neceſſary to prohibit ſuch deteſtable, filthy, and cruel practices, as are here mentioned! That ever it ſhould enter into the mind of rational creatures to ſerve the devil and their own luſts, with ſuch degradation, far beneath the brutes themſelves! From this polluted fountain the earth hath been filled with abominable crimes in all ages, and the very creation groans under the burden of man's iniquity: and though one land after another vomiteth out its inhabitants, as unable any longer to endure their wickedneſs; though one generation is ſwept away after another into the grave; yet ſtill the

2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, Ye ſhall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3 Ye ſhall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my ſabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

4 Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourſelves molten gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

5 And if ye offer a ſacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD; ye ſhall offer it, at your own will.

6 It ſhall be eaten the ſame day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it ſhall be burnt in the fire.

7 And if it be eaten at all on the third day, *it is* abominable; it ſhall not be accepted.

8 Therefore *every one* that eateth it ſhall bear his iniquity, becauſe he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD: and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people.

9 And when ye reap the harveſt of your land, thou ſhalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither ſhalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harveſt.

10 And thou ſhalt not glean thy vineyard, neither ſhalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou ſhalt leave them for the poor and ſtranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

11 Ye ſhall not ſteal, neither deal falſely, neither lie one to another.

12 And ye ſhall not ſwear by my name falſely, neither ſhalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

13 Thou ſhalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him:* the wages of him that is hired, ſhall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

14 Thou ſhalt not curſe the deaf, nor put a ſtumbling-block before the blind, but ſhalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

15 Ye ſhall do no unrighteouſneſs in judgment; thou ſhalt not reſpect the perſon of the poor, nor honour the perſon of the mighty: *but* in righteouſneſs ſhalt thou judge thy neighbour.

16 Thou ſhalt not go up and down *as* a tale-bearer among thy people; neither ſhalt thou ſtand againſt the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.

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earth is filled with ſin. Ere long it ſhall be burnt up with all its works; and "new heavens, and a new earth, in "which dwelleth righteouſneſs," ſhall ſucceed. But without we are previouſly cleanſed in the fountain of the Redeemer's blood, and have "a new heart given us, and a "new ſpirit put within us," we ſhall never find entrance there. Let us then profit by the aweful examples of vengeance recorded, and fear the threatenings denounced, in God's word: let us mortify the deeds of the body, and learn ſelf-denial: and above all, being aware of the deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of the human heart, let us walk watchfully, and humbly dependent upon the grace of God, ſought in earneſt prayer. Then we ſhall eſcape the condemnation of the wicked, and the Lord himſelf will be our God, and our portion for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 2. *Ye ſhall be holy*, &c.] Holineſs conſiſts in ſeparation from ſin, devotedneſs to God, and conformity to his moral excellencies, which are alſo tranſcribed in his holy law. Without holineſs we cannot walk with God, or have fellowſhip with him: and though an *external* purity was under the law expreſſed by being holy to the Lord; yet this was but an *emblem* of that purity of heart, which was eſpecially intended. (Note 1 *Peter*, i. 13—16.)

V. 3. *Ye ſhall fear*, &c.] Moſt of theſe precepts rather require an attentive mind and an obedient heart in the reader, than the labour of an expoſitor. "Every man," whatever his age, wiſdom, or wealth may be, is commanded to "fear his mother," (here placed firſt) "and "his father." That is, to treat them with reſpect and tenderneſs, fearing to grieve or offend them, and reverencing their authority and commands. Children are apt to love the mother moſt, and fear the father moſt: and, when grown up, men are apt to treat the authority of their mothers with neglect, though they may be kind to them. To obviate this propenſity the precept ſeems intentionally to be thus worded, and thus connected, as equally indiſpenſable with keeping God's ſabbaths.

V. 5—8.] Many reaſons for theſe repetitions, of ſome laws more than others, might ariſe from the conduct or cuſtoms of the people, or of the ſurrounding nations.

V. 13. *The wages*, &c.] That is, if the perſon concerned want, or require them.

V. 14. *Thou ſhalt not*, &c.] The ſpirit of this law forbids ſpeaking to the diſadvantage of the abſent; reproaching and inſulting the meek; impoſing upon or giving bad counſel to the ignorant; and reviling or ridiculing men's bodily infirmities.

V. 16. *A tale-bearer*, &c.] The original word ſeems to imply a *cheating pedlar*, who trades in ſcandal, and goes from place to place bartering one ſlander for another, to the injury of all parties concerned. This infamous though common practice is connected with conſpiring, or procuring, the death of another, as if of equal malignity.

17 Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.

18 Thou ſhalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge againſt the children of thy people, but thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf: I *am* the LORD.

19 Ye ſhall keep my ſtatutes: Thou ſhalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverſe kind: Thou ſhalt not ſow thy field with mingled ſeed: neither ſhall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.

20 And whoſoever lieth carnally with a woman that *is* a bondmaid betrothed to an huſband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; ſhe ſhall be ſcourged: they ſhall not be put to death, becauſe ſhe was not free.

21 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *even* a ram for a treſpaſs-offering.

22 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering before the LORD, for his ſin which he hath done, and the ſin which he hath done ſhall be forgiven him.

23 And when ye ſhall come into the land, and ſhall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye ſhall count the fruit thereof as uncircumciſed: three years ſhall it be as uncircumciſed unto you: it ſhall not be eaten of.

24 But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof ſhall be holy, to praiſe the LORD *withal*.

25 And in the fifth year ſhall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increaſe thereof: I *am* the LORD your God.

26 Ye ſhall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither ſhall ye uſe inchantment, nor obſerve times.

V. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate*, &c.] If any one have injured us, inſtead of harbouring reſentment, venting reproaches, or contriving revenge, we ſhould calmly and fairly reaſon the matter with him: not only that, being convinced of his fault, he may make proper acknowledgments and reparation *to us*; but that he may repent, and obtain forgiveneſs *of God*. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* xviii. 15—18). This ſeems the *literal* import of this remarkable precept: but the reaſon of it extends much further; and ſhews that it evinces a want of love to others, and may be conſtrued into hatred of them, if we ſee them commit and continue in ſin, with indifference, and without attempting in a proper manner to bring them to repent and forſake their evil courſes: and that a mild, plain, and ſeaſonable reproof is one of the beſt expreſſions of love to our brother, of which we are capable; though it be very difficult and generally unwelcome. (*Pſalm* cxli. 5.) It is like ſeizing a ſerpent, which is about to ſting a man to death, at the hazard of being ſtung ourſelves.

V. 18. *Thou ſhalt love*, &c.] This law *ſeems* here limited to their brethren of the houſe of Iſrael; for as they lived among the devoted Canaanites, and were required to extirpate them, they could not extend to them this law of love. This gave riſe to the narrow interpretation, which the Scribes put upon it; (*Matt.* v. 43.) though by looking to the 33d and 34th verſes, they might have ſeen that all other ſtrangers were included in it. The whole law, as "it relates to our duty to man," is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, (*Rom.* xiii. 8, 9. *Gal.* v. 14,) which is ſo often quoted in the New Teſtament, and ſo highly commended.—It evidently requires that we ſhould be as unwilling to injure, and as deſirous to benefit, any human being, as we are unwilling to hurt, and deſirous to do good to ourſelves: and this in relation to body, ſoul, property, character, eaſe, peace, and connections; and that we ſhould honour what is honourable, love what is lovely, commend what is commendable, excuſe what is excuſable, and compaſſionate what calls for pity, &c.; even as we would have done in our own caſe. This one rule properly obſerved would fill the world with peace and happineſs; even as full as it now is of diſcord and miſery.

V. 19. *Thou*, &c.] Theſe practices might be conſidered as an attempt to alter the original conſtitution of God in creation: and this prohibition ſeems to imply a commandment of ſincerity and godly ſimplicity in all we do: ſingleneſs of dependence on Chriſt; ſingleneſs of eye to the glory of God, and his acceptance and approbation; and ſingleneſs of expectation from him as our portion. To endeavour to reconcile the ſervice of God and mammon; or the pleaſures of the world and thoſe of religion: to unite works and grace in the matter of juſtification; and many other ſuch heterogeneous and unnatural commixtures may here be covertly prohibited.

V. 23—25.] This commandment might be intended to teach the people to wait patiently the Lord's time for every deſirable good, and not to yield to the eagerneſs of their natural appetites and inclinations. Thus he alſo waits for the maturity of our fruits of righteouſneſs; though our firſt attempts to glorify him may be *unmeet* for that purpoſe, as the fruits of theſe young trees whilſt they were to be accounted *uncircumciſed*.

V. 26. *Uſe enchantment*, &c.] Aſtrological calculations, or other attempts at prediction, or fortune-telling; the uſe of ſpells and charms for the cure of diſeaſes, &c.; with many other practices too frequent among profeſſing Chriſtians, are attempts to revive this worſhip of Satan, and ſhould be abhorred as his very ordinances; being *means uſed* to get help and information *elſewhere*, inſtead of depending on God, ſubmitting to him, and waiting for all needful good from him, in the uſe of lawful means, (31.)

27 Ye

27 Ye ſhall not round the corners of your heads, neither ſhalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.

28 Ye ſhall not make any cuttings in your fleſh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

29 Do not proſtitute thy daughter, to cauſe her to be a whore; leſt the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedneſs.

30 Ye ſhall keep my ſabbaths, and reverence my ſanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

31 Regard not them that have familiar ſpirits, neither ſeek after wizards to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

32 Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

33 And if a ſtranger ſojourn with thee in your land, ye ſhall not vex him.

34 *But* the ſtranger that dwelleth with you ſhall be unto you as one born amongſt you, and thou ſhalt love him as thyſelf; for ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

35 Ye ſhall do no unrighteouſneſs in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in meaſure.

36 Juſt balances, juſt weights, a juſt ephah, and a juſt hin ſhall ye have: I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 Therefore ſhall ye obſerve all my ſtatutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

CHAP.

V. 27, 28.] Theſe were doubtleſs ſuperſtitious practices of the Heathens; and perhaps the prohibition of the next verſe has alſo relation to the very common practices of many idolaters in honour of their infamous deities.

V. 34. *The*, &c.] The Iſraelites were commanded to encourage ſtrangers to reſide among them, that they might learn the knowledge of God, and of his truth, law, and worſhip. Remembering the kind uſage which their fathers at firſt met with in Egypt, and how reaſonable it appeared to them, they were required to imitate it: and remembering how cruel and hard they deemed their after-treatment, they were cautioned to avoid copying ſo bad an example.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though the Lord be rich in mercy and goodneſs, yet his perfect holineſs renders it impoſſible that we ſhould be happy in him, or that he ſhould delight in us, without we be made holy alſo: thoſe, therefore, whom he ſpecially loves, he effectually ſanctifies. To underſtand the nature of this holineſs, let us meditate on theſe moral precepts: there we ſhall learn, that it conſiſts in reverencing the majeſty and authority of God, in loving his excellency, in gratefully remembering his mercies, in delighting in his worſhip and ſervice, in ſubmitting to his will, and confiding in his power and love: and that it includes in it truth, integrity, equity, and benevolence, love to our brethren, compaſſion for the miſerable, liberality to the poor, kindneſs to ſtrangers and to enemies, and to all men, with a ſuitable regard to all relative duties; and alſo purity, chaſtity, ſobriety, and an habitual government of the appetites and paſſions, according to the commandments, and in the faith, fear, and love of God. Would we know in what manner this holineſs is to be attained, we muſt conſider the intention and meaning of the poſitive inſtitutions of the word of God; that by a believing attendance on thoſe which the New Teſtament enjoins, we may through them receive from the Redeemer's fulneſs, the ſanctifying influences of divine Grace: remembering alſo that the vanities of the world, and the ſuperſtitions of falſe religion are as much the *means of ſin*, as the ordinances of God are *means of grace*; and therefore we muſt withdraw from them to the utmoſt diſtance, if we would be the holy people of a holy God. In his holineſs he is peculiarly attentive to the poor, and if we are his people we ſhall be ſo to; and "while he gives us "all things *richly* to enjoy," we muſt not think that our indigent brother is to be always put off with the bareſt neceſſaries, but ſhould enable him at ſome times to taſte with us the comforts of life alſo; not deeming that waſted which he receives. This, and all other relative duties muſt ſpring from a regard to God, who both avenges the injuries done, and recompenſes the kindneſſes ſhewn to thoſe who cannot avenge or recompenſe for themſelves; and eſpecially bleſſes thoſe who reſpect their parents, and give honour to whom honour is due.—The attention of God not only reaches to groſs and ſcandalous inſtances of injuſtice, but to the petty diſhoneſty of falſe weights and meaſures: and our conſcience ought to be no leſs ſcrupulous and minute.—How prone to iniquity muſt man's heart be, when parents are capable of proſtituting their own daughters; and when ſuch vile practices, inſtead of exciting abhorrence, are readily imitated, 'till they overſpread whole nations! But though ſome crimes are more enormous than others, none can be expiated but by the blood of Chriſt, or forgiven without repentance: nor are any of God's precepts to be accounted ſmall; but we muſt ſhew our ſincerity and ſimplicity in his ſervice, by obſerving them all, by giving every part of religion its due place and proportion; and by doing all things for thoſe ends and purpoſes which he hath appointed, without neglecting, or perverting any.—If ſin be the greateſt of all evils, what need have we to be thankful to thoſe who tell us plainly of our faults, and will not ſuffer ſin upon us! But all men ſhould deteſt the conduct of thoſe who backbite and ſlander others, and rob them of their characters, when they have no power to defend themſelves.—Finally, the nearer our lives and tempers are to the precepts of God's law, the happier ſhall we be, and the

happier

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The punishment of those who gave their seed unto Molech, or sought unto witches or wizards, 1—6. *2d. That of those who cursed father or mother, committed adultery, incest, unnatural crimes, or witchcraft,* 9—21. 27. *3d. General calls unto holiness,* 7, 8. 22—26.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever *he be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth *any* of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.
3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people: because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.
4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not;
5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.
6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.
7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.
8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you.
9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.
10 And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.
12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them.
13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed

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happier shall we render all around us, and the better we shall adorn the gospel: let us then daily and earnestly pray, 'Lord have mercy upon us, and write all thy laws in our 'hearts we beseech thee.'

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 2—5.] Molech is supposed to have been an idol worshipped by the Ammonites and neighbouring nations, to whom they sometimes offered their children as sacrifices, according to some authors in the following manner. An image of an enormous size was made of hollow iron, which they heated with great fires beneath; and when it was sufficiently hot, they put the children into it's arms, where they were burnt to death: mean time their cries were drowned in the noise of trumpets, and of other musical instruments in abundance which were played on for that purpose. At other times the children only passed through a fire, or between two fires, and were thus devoted to this demon.—Nothing can be conceived more horrible than such practices. Nothing can more demonstrate the madness and desperate wickedness of man's heart, and the power of Satan over wicked people, than the occasion which there was of enacting such laws as this, and prohibiting parents from such cruelty to their own offspring on pain of death: except it be that, notwithstanding these laws and sanctions, numbers of Israelites were, from age to age, so infatuated as to persist in this barbarity. Committed by *them*, it was the highest imaginable contempt of the Name, sanctuary, and worship of Jehovah; and a shameful violation of their national covenant: if therefore, by any means, the criminal escaped the sword of the magistrate, God declared his determination to execute vengeance on him, on his family, and on all who aided and abetted this spiritual whoredom.

V. 6. *Go a whoring*, &c.] By this expression our former conclusion is corroborated, (Note, xix. 26.) that consulting with men or women, practising *or pretending* to witchcraft in any of it's forms, is a real act of idolatry, and of worshipping the devil.

V. 9. *His blood shall be upon him.*] They who put the offender to death would contract no guilt; he deserved his doom, and had none to blame but himself.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When neither the fear and love of God, nor regard to the state of future and eternal recompence, nor any

committed an abomination; they ſhall ſurely be put to death: their blood *ſhall be* upon them.

14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it *is* wickedneſs: they ſhall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedneſs among you.

15 And if a man lie with a beaſt, he ſhall ſurely be put to death: and ye ſhall ſlay the beaſt.

16 And if a woman approach unto any beaſt, and lie down thereto, thou ſhalt kill the woman and the beaſt: they ſhall ſurely be put to death; their blood *ſhall be* upon them.

17 And if a man ſhall take his ſiſter, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and ſee her nakedneſs, and ſhe ſee his nakedneſs, it *is* a wicked thing; and they ſhall be cut off in the ſight of their people: he hath uncovered his ſiſter's nakedneſs; he ſhall bear his iniquity.

18 And if a man ſhall lie with a woman having her ſickneſs, and ſhall uncover her nakedneſs, he hath diſcovered her fountain, and ſhe hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them ſhall be cut off from among their people.

19 And thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy mother's ſiſter, nor of thy father's ſiſter; for he uncovereth his near kin: they ſhall bear their iniquity.

20 And if a man ſhall lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedneſs: they ſhall bear their ſin; they ſhall die childleſs.

21 And if a man ſhall take his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedneſs, they ſhall be childleſs.

22 Ye ſhall therefore keep all my ſtatutes, and all my judgments, and do them; that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein ſpue you not out.

23 And ye ſhall not walk in the manners of the nations which I caſt out before you: for they committed all theſe things, and therefore I abhorred them.

24 But I have ſaid unto you, ye ſhall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to poſſeſs it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I *am* the Lord your God, which have ſeparated you from *other* people.

25 Ye ſhall therefore put difference between clean beaſts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and ye ſhall not make

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motives of reaſon, truth, decency, and the welfare of ſociety, can deter men from enormous crimes, it is needful for the magiſtrate to uſe his ſword, and by cutting off a mortified limb to prevent further miſchief to the body politic. Such examples of ſeverity when not needleſsly multiplied, are wholeſome leſſons; and the lives of individuals thus taken away prevent the ſpread of wickedneſs, and the accumulation of national guilt.—But if magiſtrates neglect their duty, and criminals evade human laws, God will ſet his face againſt them; and how then can they eſcape?—Are we ſhocked at the unnatural cruelty of theſe ancient idolaters, in thus ſacrificing their children to the devil in the form of an idol? Indeed we juſtly may. Yet alas! there are vaſt multitudes of parents in the world, who, by their pernicious inſtructions and wicked examples, and by the myſteries of iniquity into which they early initiate their children, effectually devote them to Satan's ſervice, and blindly forward their everlaſting deſtruction, in a manner not a whit leſs, if not ſtill more, to be lamented. But what an account muſt ſuch parents render to God, and what a meeting will they have with their children at the day of judgment? On the other hand let children remember, that he who curſed father or mother was ſurely put to death, with his blood upon his own head. Let adulterers hear the judgment of God reſpecting their crimes, and remember that their rejoicing in the ſlackneſs of human juſtice, and in the impunity which now emboldens them in ſin, is an expiring joy, and will probably occaſion their ſtill deeper guilt and condemnation. The ſecret and unnatural crimes, of which many are conſcious who conceal them from men, will ſoon be brought to light, and into judgment before a holy God; and criminal indulgences will ſurely iſſue in dreadful lamentations hereafter; if not mourned for with godly ſorrow and bitter remorſe in this world.—As ſuch crimes cauſed God to abhor the Canaanites, he will much more abhor them in his profeſſing people. By his word and ordinances he hath ſevered us from others, and is known by the Name of the Lord that ſanctifieth us. Let us then ſeparate ourſelves from the company and practices of the ungodly; let us attend on his ordinances, plead his promiſes, and ſeek his ſalvation, that we may be holy in reality, as well as in profeſſion; that we may learn and obſerve the difference between clean and unclean in every thing; and that the Lord may indeed be our God and portion, and we his people, in time and to eternity.

NOTES.

make your ſouls abominable by beaſt or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have ſeparated from you as unclean.

26 And ye ſhall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have ſevered you from *other* people, that ye ſhould be mine.

27 A man alſo or woman that hath a familiar ſpirit, or that is a wizard, ſhall ſurely be put to death: they ſhall ſtone them with ſtones; their blood *ſhall be* upon them.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. Laws reſpecting the mourning, families, and marriages of the prieſts, 1—15. *2d. Concerning corporal blemiſhes, which excluded from the work of the prieſthood,* 16—24.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto the prieſts the ſons of Aaron, and ſay unto them, There ſhall none be defiled for the dead among his people.

2 But for his kin that is near unto him, *that is*, for his mother, and for his father, and for his ſon, and for his daughter, and for his brother,

3 And for his ſiſter a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no huſband: for her may he be defiled.

4 *But* he ſhall not defile himſelf, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himſelf.

5 They ſhall not make baldneſs upon their head, neither ſhall they ſhave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their fleſh.

6 They ſhall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they ſhall be holy.

7 They ſhall not take a wife *that is* a whore or profane, neither ſhall they take a woman put away from her huſband: for he *is* holy unto his God.

8 Thou ſhalt ſanctify him therefore, for he offereth the bread of thy God: he ſhall be holy unto thee, for I the LORD which ſanctify you *am* holy.

9 And the daughter of any prieſt, if ſhe profane herſelf by playing the whore, ſhe profaneth her father: ſhe ſhall be burnt with fire.

10 And *he that is* the high prieſt among his brethren, upon whoſe head the anointing oil was poured, and that is conſecrated to put on

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NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—4.] Any perſon was rendered unclean for ſeven days by entering into the tent, where the dead body lay, (*Num.* xix. 14.) The prieſts therefore muſt not attend on any funeral, except on thoſe of their neareſt relations; *no not that of a chief man among the people*, ſo the expreſſion may be interpreted, (4.) By this reſtriction, and the prohibition of expreſſing their grief by any extravagant or ſuperſtitious tokens, they were taught to moderate their natural paſſions; and perhaps to intimate their belief of a future ſtate. (Note, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13—15.)

V. 6. *Profane the name*, &c.] The office of the prieſts in offering their ſacrifices, (here called *the bread of their God*, the proviſions of God's houſe and altar, where he, as it were, came and feaſted with his people,) would be placed in a conſpicuous light, and many would note their conduct: it behoved them therefore to be very circumſpect, leſt God and his worſhip ſhould be diſregarded through their miſconduct even in little things.

V. 7. *They*, &c.] The prieſts muſt not marry one who had been an harlot, though penitent; nor a woman of ſuſpicious character or ungodly; nor one who had been divorced; for it might be preſumed, that it was for ſome miſconduct. Their male children were all prieſts by birth, 'and,' ſays Mr. Henry, 'he that would ſeek a godly ſeed, 'muſt firſt ſeek a godly wife.'

V. 8. *Thou ſhalt ſanctify*, &c.] This ſeems addreſſed to Moſes, as a command to give proper inſtructions, and to exerciſe his authority and influence, that the prieſts might be thus preſerved from unhallowed marriages, and from every other thing inconſiſtent with their ſacred character.

V. 9. *And*, &c.] Such conduct in a prieſt's daughter would be highly diſgraceful to religion, and a reflection upon the parent's care of his family. This dreadful puniſhment denounced of God would not only be a reſtraint upon the children; but likewiſe a leſſon to the parents, to watch over them, to keep them out of the way of temptation, and to give them a proper education.

V. 10—15.] The eldeſt ſon of the high prieſt is ſuppoſed to have been anointed in his father's life time, if he came to a proper age, and to have acted as his deputy in caſe of ſickneſs or ceremonial uncleanneſs. Upon his death therefore the office immediately devolved upon him, and he muſt not incapacitate himſelf for performing it, either then or on any future occaſion, on any account whatever. As the immediate type of Chriſt he muſt ſhew greater ſuperiority over his natural affections, and be more

on the garments, ſhall not uncover his head, nor rent his clothes:

11 Neither ſhall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himſelf for his father, or for his mother:

12 Neither ſhall he go out of the ſanctuary, nor profane the ſanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am* the LORD.

13 And he ſhall take a wife in her virginity.

14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, *or* an harlot, theſe ſhall he not take: but he ſhall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

15 Neither ſhall he profane his ſeed among his people: for I the LORD do ſanctify him.

16 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

17 Speak unto Aaron, ſaying, Whoſoever *he be* of thy ſeed in their generations, that hath *any* blemiſh, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God:

18 For whatſoever man *he be* that hath a blemiſh, he ſhall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat noſe, or any thing ſuperfluous,

19 Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed;

20 Or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemiſh in his eye, or be ſcurvy, or ſcabbed, or hath his ſtones broken:

21 No man that hath a blemiſh of the ſeed of Aaron the prieſt, ſhall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire; he hath a blemiſh, he ſhall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.

22 He ſhall eat the bread of his God, *both* of the moſt holy, and of the holy;

23 Only he ſhall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, becauſe he hath a blemiſh; that he profane not my ſanctuaries: for I the LORD do ſanctify them.

24 And Moſes told *it* unto Aaron, and to his ſons, and unto all the children of Iſrael.

CHAP.

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more circumſpect in his conduct, than the other prieſts. He muſt marry therefore a virgin, and none elſe; (*Ez.* xlv. 22. *Rev.* xiv. 4. 2 *Cor.* xi. 2;) and muſt not leave any ſtain on his poſterity either by his own improper marriage, or by allowing them to marry improperly.

V. 17—24.] Theſe corporal blemiſhes, though they rendered the prieſts unfit for ſome of their work, yet did not exclude them from their maintenance, or from ſubordinate ſervices, not even from inſtructing the people. They were external ſigns of the ſcandals and reproach of ſin, reſting on a man's character, (1 *Tim.* iii. 7,) which render even the true penitent unfit for the work of the miniſtry, until they be done away by a continued courſe of good behaviour.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As theſe prieſts were types of Chriſt, ſo all miniſters eſpecially muſt be followers of him: that their example may elucidate and corroborate their inſtructions, and teach the people in imitating them to imitate the Saviour. He was perfectly ſuperior to all natural affections; and in the buſineſs of his heavenly Father, would not be interrupted, or biaſſed even by his regard to his earthly parent. Abſolutely dead to the world, and filled with zeal for the glory of the Father and compaſſion to the ſouls of men, he was unwearied in his labours, and perſevering in his ſufferings, 'till he could ſay "It is finiſhed." Without blemiſh and ſeparate from ſinners he executed his prieſtly office on earth: and, being aſcended into heaven, he is preparing his church of redeemed ſinners, that "not having ſpot, or blemiſh, or "any ſuch thing," he may eſpouſe it as a chaſte virgin unto himſelf for ever: and he requires all his family to remember the relation in which they ſtand unto him, and to act conſiſtently. What manner of perſons then ſhould his miniſters be? Surely their characters ſhould be free from ſcandal; and their hearts from the dominion of ſin, and from the love of filthy lucre, worldly honour, and ſenſual indulgence. They ſhould be unwearied in, undiverted from, and chearful about, their work, "giving themſelves wholly "thereto." They ſhould be patient in tribulations, ſuperior to the power of their paſſions, circumſpect in their walk, cautious in their connections, and exemplary in the government of their families, (1 *Tim.* iii. 4—5.) Nothing is of more importance to the intereſts of religion than the unblemiſhed character, and the ſober, decent, and reſpectable conduct and demeanor of the wives and children of miniſters, (1 *Tim.* iii. 11. *Titus* i. 6.) For the people will always think themſelves authoriſed to go ſome ſteps further in conformity to the world, in compliance with its vain faſhions and cuſtoms, and in purſuit of its intereſts and pleaſures, than the miniſter and his family do; and will interpret his preaching, by *their* practiſing; ſuppoſing *him* accountable for *their* miſconduct, or as giving it the ſanction of his approbation.—Our God is *now* as holy, as when he commanded the offending daughter of a prieſt to be burnt: how then ſhould the children of miniſters tremble leſt they diſgrace their parent's character, prevent the effects of his miniſtry, and expoſe themſelves to the fierce wrath of God! Equally careful ſhould this render miniſters of their children; not giving them what is called a good education, which is commonly a worldly education,

CHAP. XXII.

Contains laws. 1*ſt. Concerning the holy things, when the prieſts might eat of them, and when not; who might eat of them, and who might not; and the reſtitution to be made by him who had unwittingly tranſgreſſed this law,* 1—16. 2*d. Concerning the animals which were to be offered in ſacrifice; with calls and motives to obedience,* 17—33.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Speak unto Aaron, and to his ſons, that they ſeparate themſelves from the holy things of the children of Iſrael, and that they profane not my holy name *in thoſe things* which they hallow unto me: I *am* the LORD.
3 Say unto them, Whoſoever *he be* of all your ſeed among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Iſrael hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanneſs upon him, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from my preſence: I *am* the LORD.
4 What man ſoever of the ſeed of Aaron *is* a leper, or hath a running iſſue; he ſhall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoſo toucheth any thing *that is* unclean *by* the dead, or a man whoſe ſeed goeth from him;
5 Or whoſoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanneſs, whatſoever uncleanneſs he hath;
6 The ſoul which hath touched any ſuch ſhall be unclean until even, and ſhall not eat of the holy things, unleſs he waſh his fleſh with water.
7 And when the ſun is down, he ſhall be clean, and ſhall afterward eat of the holy things; becauſe it *is* his food.
8 That which dieth of itſelf, or is torn *with beaſts*, he ſhall not eat to defile himſelf therewith: I *am* the LORD.
9 They ſhall therefore keep mine ordinance, leſt they bear ſin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it: I the LORD do ſanctify them.
10 There ſhall no ſtranger eat *of* the holy thing: a ſojourner of the prieſt, or an hired ſervant, ſhall not eat *of* the holy thing.
11 But if the prieſt buy *any* ſoul with his money, he ſhall eat of it, and he that is born in his houſe: they ſhall eat of his meat.
12 If the prieſt's daughter alſo be *married* unto a ſtranger, ſhe may not eat of an offering of the holy things.
13 But if the prieſt's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's houſe, as in her youth, ſhe ſhall eat of her father's meat: but there ſhall no ſtranger eat thereof.
14 And if a man eat *of* the holy thing unwittingly, then he ſhall put the fifth *part* thereof unto it, and ſhall give *it* unto the prieſt, with the holy thing.
15 And they ſhall not profane the holy things of the children of Iſrael which they offer unto the LORD;
16 Or ſuffer them to bear the iniquity of treſpaſs,

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education, but training them up in ſobriety, frugality, and induſtry, at a diſtance from the diſſipations and temptations of the world, and in the knowledge and fear of God; reſtraining and correcting every evil propenſity, ſetting them a good example, and offering continual prayers for them: for the child's wickedneſs will be conſidered as the parent's reproach, as well as affliction; and frequently it is ſo, though not always.—But we are all, if Chriſtians, ſpiritual prieſts: and the miniſter is called to ſet a good example, in order that the people may imitate it. They too muſt be dead to the world and ſeparated from it; not ſorrowing, or rejoicing, deſiring, purſuing, or poſſeſſing worldly things in the ſame manner as others do; but taking the Lord for their portion, rejoicing in him continually, delighting in his ſervice, and uſing all to his glory.—Our bodily infirmities, bleſſed be God, cannot now exclude us from his heavenly glory. And they, who on many accounts may be diſqualified for the work of the miniſtry, may ſerve God with comfort in other ſituations in his church. Finally they, who without their own fault are incapable of further ſervice, muſt neither be deſpiſed nor deprived of ſuitable maintenance.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 2. *Holy things.*] Theſe were the parts of the ſacrifices which were given to the prieſts, the ſhewbread, and whatever was more immediately preſented to the Lord. Some were *moſt holy*, to be eaten only by the prieſts in the ſanctuary: others were *holy*, to be eaten by them and their families in their own houſes. But the tythes, and many other perquiſites, might be diſpoſed of at their will.

V. 3. *Cut off from my preſence, &c.*] Some interpret this of the offender being excluded from any more officiating as a prieſt; others, of his being cut off by ſome immediate ſtroke from God.

V. 16. *Or ſuffer, &c.*] To eat the holy things, was either

treſpaſs, when they eat their holy things; for I the LORD do ſanctify them.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

18 Speak unto Aaron, and to his ſons, and unto all the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, Whoſoever *he be* of the houſe of Iſrael, or of the ſtrangers in Iſrael, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his free-will offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt-offering;

19 *Ye ſhall offer* at your own will a male without blemiſh of the beeves, of the ſheep, or of the goats.

20 *But* whatſoever hath a blemiſh, *that* ſhall ye not offer: for it ſhall not be acceptable for you.

21 And whoſoever offereth a ſacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, to accompliſh *his* vow, or a free-will offering in beeves, or ſheep, it ſhall be perfect to be accepted; there ſhall be no blemiſh therein.

22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or ſcurvy, or ſcabbed, ye ſhall not offer theſe unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

23 Either a bullock, or a lamb, that hath any thing ſuperfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayeſt thou offer *for* a free-will offering; but for a vow it ſhall not be accepted.

24 Ye ſhall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruiſed, or cruſhed, or broken, or cut; neither ſhall ye make *any offering thereof* in your land.

25 Neither from a ſtranger's hand ſhall ye offer the bread of your God of any of theſe; becauſe their corruption *is* in them, *and* blemiſhes *be* in them: they ſhall not be accepted for you.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

27 When a bullock, or a ſheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it ſhall be ſeven days under the dam; and from the eighth day, and thenceforth, it ſhall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

28 And *whether it be* cow or ewe, ye ſhall not kill it and her young both in one day.

29 And when ye will offer a ſacrifice of thankſgiving unto the LORD, offer *it* at your own will.

30 On the ſame day it ſhall be eaten up; ye ſhall leave none of it until the morrow: I *am* the LORD.

31 Therefore ſhall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

32 Neither ſhall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Iſrael: I *am* the LORD which hallow you,

33 That brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains laws concerning, 1ſt. The weekly Sabbath, 1—3. *2d. The feaſt of the Paſſover, and of unleavened bread; and the oblation of the firſt-fruits,* 4—14. *3d. The feaſt of weeks, or Pentecoſt; with a memento about the gleanings of their fields,* 15—22. *4th. The feaſt of trumpets,* 23—25. *5th. The day of atonement,* 26—32. *6th. The feaſt of tabernacles,* 33—44.

AND

either a preſumptuous or an unwary attempt to expiate their own guilt, inſtead of transferring it to the prieſts, as types of Chriſt.

V. 21—24.] The burnt-offerings typified Chriſt's unblemiſhed ſacrifice, and denoted the offerer's entire devotedneſs to God; the peace-offering of a vow repreſented his *indiſpenſable* duty: in theſe caſes the beſt alone would be accepted. But the blemiſhed animal might be offered for a free-will offering; when love for the courts and altar of God, and for his brethren, diſpoſed a man, without any previous obligations, to offer a ſacrifice and make a ſacred feaſt for his friends, for the prieſts, and for the poor.

V. 25. *Neither*, &c.] As an intimation of the Lord's purpoſes of kindneſs to the Gentiles, they were encouraged to offer ſacrifices to his name; but theſe were not allowed of, unleſs they were free from blemiſh.

V. 27. *When*, &c.] From the ſame time that the male children were dedicated to the Lord by circumciſion, the cattle were deemed meet for ſacrifice: that is, ſay the Jewiſh writers, when one ſabbath, which ſanctifies all things, muſt have paſſed over them. (Note, xii. 1—5.)

V. 28. *Whether*, &c.] The reaſon of this reſtriction is not very plain: it might ſeem cruel and unfeeling, yet to ſlay cattle in this manner for food ſeems not forbidden; nor thus in general to ſlaughter other creatures. But the Lord has many reaſons for his conduct, and for his commandments, of which we are not informed. The practice might be a ſuperſtitious heathen cuſtom.

PRACTICAL

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, *concerning* the feaſts of the LORD, which ye ſhall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, *even* theſe *are* my feaſts.
3 Six days ſhall work be done, but the ſeventh day *is* the ſabbath of reſt, an holy convocation; ye ſhall do no work *therein:* it *is* the ſabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.
4 Theſe *are* the feaſts of the LORD, *even* holy convocations, which ye ſhall proclaim in their ſeaſons.
5 In the fourteenth *day* of the firſt month at even *is* the LORD's paſſover.
6 And on the fifteenth day of the ſame month *is* the feaſt of unleavened bread unto the LORD: ſeven days ye muſt eat unleavened bread.
7 In the firſt day ye ſhall have an holy convocation; ye ſhall do no ſervile work therein.
8 But ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD ſeven days: in the ſeventh day *is* an holy convocation, ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*
9 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
10 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and ſhall reap the harveſt thereof, then ye ſhall bring a ſheaf of the firſt-fruits of your harveſt unto the prieſt:
11 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt with gratitude we recollect that our great High-Prieſt is not liable to any incapacitating impediments to the diſcharge of his office, either habitual or incidental, but is ſuch a perfectly holy and glorious High-Prieſt, as became us; and that his one unblemiſhed ſacrifice is of perpetual and general efficacy for all who come to God through him: let us alſo remember, that the Lord requires that we reverence his Name, his truths, his ordinances, and his commandments. The man, who enters into the miniſtry, and who handles the word of God, or adminiſters his ſacraments out of covetouſneſs or ambition, whilſt he indulges in known, allowed, and habitual ſin, either openly or in ſecret; and thoſe profeſſed Chriſtians, who make religion their pretence, but gain their object; or who approach the Lord's table merely as a ſtep towards preferment, or with a heart full of allowed covetouſneſs, malice, or luſt; ſuch perſons, I ſay, preſume to eat of the holy things with their uncleanneſs upon them, and muſt anſwer for it to God. Let us then beware of hypocriſy; and both examine ourſelves and ſeek to be purified from our ſinful defilements, in the blood of Chriſt, and by his ſanctifying Spirit; that we may not profane the Name of God in theſe hallowed things; but uſe them with acceptance to his glory, and to our own benefit and comfort. And when, as his prieſts, we have feaſted at his table, let us never more defile ourſelves with the baſe pleaſures of ſin and of the world.—It is very proper that we ſhould carefully diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe who ought, and thoſe who ought not, to eat of theſe holy things: and we ſhall find, if we carefully conſult the Scriptures, that he who attempts to expiate his own ſin, or approaches in the pride of ſelf-righteouſneſs, puts as great an affront on Chriſt, whoſe bleeding love to ſinners he profeſſes to commemorate, as he who comes to the Lord's table from the gratification of ſinful luſts. This is a ſin, which is often committed unwittingly; but muſt be repented of, if men would not bear their own iniquities, which 'is a burden too heavy 'for them' to ſupport. Nor can the miniſter, who loves the ſouls of the people, *ſuffer them* to continue in this dangerous deluſion; but muſt call upon them, not only to repent and forſake all their ſins; but to put their whole truſt in the atonement of Chriſt, by faith in his Name, for pardon and acceptance with God: for thus, and thus only, will the Lord ſanctify them for his peculiar people.—We muſt ſerve the Lord with the beſt of all we have, and are: yet if there be a willing mind, and an upright, humble, thankful heart, with a ſimple dependence on the unblemiſhed ſacrifice of Chriſt; our imperfect oblations will not be rejected of God, and will be uſeful to our fellow-creatures.—It is very deſirable that ſtrangers ſhould be brought acquainted with the Saviour: but we ſhould be careful, that our zeal for multiplying converts do not lead us to encourage hypocrites whoſe corruption is in them, and who will be a ſcandal to the cauſe. Even when the reaſon of the Lord's appointments doth not appear, or when we meet with many repetitions in his word; we may profitably be reminded to exerciſe humility, faith in his wiſdom, and ſubmiſſion to his authority, who deſerves from us the moſt unreſerved obedience in every thing.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *The feaſts*, &c.] Or the *ſolemnities* of the Lord, as the word is elſewhere tranſlated, (*Iſaiah* xxxiii. 20.) The day of atonement was a great *ſolemnity*, but it was *a faſt.*

V. 4. *Ye ſhall proclaim*, &c.] The prieſts were directed to give notice of the ſolemnities, and to call together the holy convocation by ſound of trumpet. (*Num.* x. 7—10.) —It would alſo devolve upon them to calculate the ſeaſons of the annual feaſts: and, in order that the computation by moons might coincide, as nearly as might be, with the revolutions of the ſun, proper intercalations muſt be made from time to time. For twelve revolutions of the moon want between five and ſix days of one revolution of the ſun: in the ſpace therefore of five or ſix years a whole moon muſt be added, to keep the feaſts any thing near the ſame ſeaſon of the year; as the offering of the firſt-fruits,

11 And he ſhall wave the ſheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the ſabbath the prieſt ſhall wave it.

12 And ye ſhall offer that day when ye wave the ſheaf an he-lamb without blemiſh of the firſt year for a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

13 And the meat-offering thereof *ſhall be* two tenth-deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD *for* a ſweet ſavour: and the drink-offering thereof *ſhall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin.

14 And ye ſhall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the ſelf-ſame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

15 And ye ſhall count unto you from the morrow after the ſabbath, from the day that ye brought the ſheaf of the wave-offering; ſeven ſabbaths ſhall be complete:

16 Even unto the morrow after the ſeventh ſabbath ſhall ye number fifty days, and ye ſhall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD.

17 Ye ſhall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth-deals: they ſhall be of fine flour; they ſhall be baken with leaven; *they are* the firſt-fruits unto the LORD.

18 And ye ſhall offer with the bread ſeven lambs without blemiſh, of the firſt year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they ſhall be *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

19 Then ye ſhall ſacrifice one kid of the goats for a ſin-offering, and two lambs of the firſt year for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings.

20 And the prieſt ſhall wave them with the bread of the firſt-fruits *for* a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they ſhall be holy to the LORD for the prieſt.

21 And ye ſhall proclaim on the ſelf-ſame day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein*: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22 And

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fruits, and many other circumſtances, would require them to be. When the people were ſettled in Canaan, proclamation muſt, by one means or other, be ſent into all their tribes, that there might be no error or diſunion amongſt them.

V. 11. *After the Sabbath*, &c.] The ſabbath here mentioned was the day of holy convocation, or the firſt day of unleavened bread, which might or might not be the weekly ſabbath. When Chriſt was crucified, this day of holy convocation fell upon the ſabbath-day, which was therefore *an high day*: on the day after, that is on the day of offering the firſt-fruits, Chriſt aroſe the firſt-fruits from the dead. This at leaſt is the ſentiment of many learned men; though there is conſiderable difficulty, and ſome difference of opinion, reſpecting it. The firſt fruits, preſented to God with a ſacrifice, implied that *their* title to the fruits of the earth was grounded upon the gift of a reconciled God, through the ſacrifice of the Saviour who was to come; and the comfortable and ſanctified uſe of them aroſe from their devoting themſelves, and their ſubſtance, to the ſervice and glory of God through him. They alſo prefigured Chriſt, not only as the firſt-fruits from the dead, and the earneſt of the great harveſt of the reſurrection to life; but as the firſt-fruits of all the race of fallen Adam, who in human nature having ſanctified himſelf, or ſet himſelf apart, to be perfectly obedient to the precept, and to endure the penalty of the broken law of God, preſented himſelf unto the Father as the earneſt of an innumerable multitude of his brethren, who ſhould be accepted and conſecrated to God, through him. For Chriſtians alſo themſelves are a kind of firſt-fruits of God's creatures here below, (*James* i. 18:) and whilſt they partake of the ſanctifying influences of the Spirit as the firſt-fruits of glory, their feeble worſhip and adoration are the firſt-fruits of their eternal hallelujahs.

V. 16—21.] By the time of *the feaſt of weeks*, or *the Pentecoſt*, the barley harveſt, which was eared at the feaſt of the paſſover, would be gathered in; and the wheat harveſt ripe, and in part reaped. Of this latter the people muſt make another acknowledgment out of *their habitations*, as the firſt-fruits were *from the field*; in fine flour *leavened*, for food, not for ſacrifice. This was to be accompanied with burnt-offerings, a ſin-offering, and peace-offerings; all denoting their unworthineſs in themſelves, their acceptance through Chriſt, devotedneſs to God, conſequent comfortable uſe of their ſubſtance, and communion with God, and with their brethren. This feaſt is alſo ſuppoſed to have been held in remembrance of the giving of the law, fifty days after the departure of the people out of Egypt: and to have looked forward to the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt fifty days after Chriſt's reſurrection; who having finiſhed and preſented his perfect obedience and acceptable ſacrifice, as the firſt-fruits unto the Father, through the gift of the Holy Ghoſt to the apoſtles, and by the converſion of three thouſand ſouls at once, preſented the other firſt-fruits of the Chriſtian church, as an earneſt of that harveſt of innumerable multitudes, which hath been gathering, and ſhall yet be gathered, in all ages and nations to the end of time.

V. 24.

22 And when ye reap the harveſt of your land, thou ſhalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapeſt, neither ſhalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harveſt: thou ſhalt leave them unto the poor, and to the ſtranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

23 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

24 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, In the ſeventh month, in the firſt *day* of the month, ſhall ye have a ſabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

25 Ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein:* but ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

27 Alſo on the tenth *day* of this ſeventh month *there ſhall be* a day of atonement, it ſhall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

28 And ye ſhall do no work in that ſame day: for it *is* a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

29 For whatſoever ſoul *it be* that ſhall not be afflicted in that ſame day, he ſhall be cut off from among his people.

30 And whatſoever ſoul *it be* that doeth any work in that ſame day, the ſame ſoul will I deſtroy from among his people.

31 Ye ſhall do no manner of work: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

32 It *ſhall be* unto you a ſabbath of reſt, and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, ſhall ye celebrate your ſabbath.

33 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

34 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, The fifteenth day of this ſeventh month *ſhall be* the feaſt of tabernacles *for* ſeven days unto the LORD.

35 On the firſt day *ſhall be* an holy convocation: ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*

36 Seven days ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day ſhall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a ſolemn aſſembly, *and* ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*

37 Theſe *are* the feaſts of the LORD, which ye ſhall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a ſacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:

38 Beſide the ſabbaths of the LORD, and beſide your gifts, and beſide all your vows, and beſide all your free-will offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

39 Alſo in the fifteenth day of the ſeventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye ſhall keep a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days: on the firſt day *ſhall be* a ſabbath, and on the eighth day *ſhall be* a ſabbath.

40 And ye ſhall take you on the firſt day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye ſhall rejoice before the LORD your God ſeven days.

41 And ye ſhall keep it a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days in the year: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in your generations; ye ſhall celebrate it in the ſeventh month.

42 Ye ſhall dwell in booths ſeven days; all that are Iſraelites born ſhall dwell in booths:

43 That

V. 24. *Blowing of trumpets*, &c.] (*Num.* x.) This feaſt ſeems to have been inſtituted on the firſt day of the ſeventh month, both becauſe the civil new year began at that time; and becauſe of the other ſolemnities obſerved in that month, which were thus announced.—The blowing of trumpets eſpecially repreſented the preaching of the goſpel; by which men are called to repent of ſin and accept of the ſalvation of Chriſt, which was ſignified by the day of atonement; and to rejoice in God, and become ſtrangers and pilgrims upon earth, which was denoted by the feaſt of tabernacles; both obſerved in this month.

V. 26—32. (*Notes, &c.* xvi.) The day of atonement was but five days before the feaſt of tabernacles: and though the Iſraelites were not then required to attend at the tabernacle or temple, as on the three great feaſts; yet it might be expected that many of them would come in time to be preſent at that ſolemnity alſo. All theſe meetings would tend to increaſe their acquaintance and affectionate intercourſe with each other.

V. 42. *Dwell in booths*, &c.] This appointment was a commemoration of Iſrael's dwelling in tents in the wilderneſs, as well as of their fathers' dwelling in tents in Canaan: to remind the nation both of the meanneſs of their

43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Iſrael to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

44 And Moſes declared unto the children of Iſrael the feaſts of the LORD.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Laws concerning the lighting of the tabernacle, and the ſhewbread, 1—9. *2d. Shelomith's ſon ſtoned to death for blaſphemy, with the repetition of ſome laws on that occaſion,* 10—23.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Command the children of Iſrael, that they bring unto thee pure oil-olive beaten for the light, to cauſe the lamps to burn continually.

3 Without the vail of the teſtimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, ſhall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in your generations.

4 He ſhall order the lamps upon the pure candleſtick before the LORD continually.

5 And thou ſhalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth-deals ſhall be in one cake.

6 And

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origin, and the greatneſs of their deliverance. Chriſt tabernacling in human nature might alſo be prefigured: but eſpecially the believer's life on earth, as a joyful ſtranger and pilgrim, whoſe home is in heaven, whither he is daily tending, is very aptly repreſented.—I ſee no certainty, nor preciſion, in the accommodation of theſe feaſts to different periods of the church.

V. 44. *The feaſts of the Lord,* &c.] All of them, except that of the new moon, are here enumerated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould not overlook the admonition of obſerving the ſabbath of the Lord, not only in public ordinances, "but in *all* our dwellings;" both ourſelves, and in our families: allowing our domeſtics all ceſſation from labour; and teaching them, by precept and example, to improve their leiſure; in order that their ſouls may now find reſt in Chriſt, and at length enjoy the reſt reſerved for the people of God.—We ſhould alſo learn to conſider the time employed in God's ſervice as profitably ſpent; and to eſteem his ordinances as holy feaſts, reliſhed more by the heaven-born ſoul than all other pleaſures, which it willingly renounces for the ſake of them. A day thus ſet apart for the buſineſs of religion will have ſo much and ſo important a work belonging to it, that other buſineſs muſt be poſtponed to make way for it.—Let us never forget "to honour the Lord with our ſubſtance, "and with the firſt-fruits of all our increaſe; ſo ſhall our "barns be filled with plenty, and our preſſes burſt out "with new wine." (*Prov.* iii. 9, 10.) And "when we "give alms of ſuch things, as we have, behold all things "are clean unto us." (*Luke* xi. 41.) Nor will the huſbandman ever have cauſe to complain, that he has leſs profit or comfort from his crop; becauſe, by leaving good gleanings, he hath made a *little harveſt* for the poor widow, or the labouring man with a large family, who have no lands or crop of their own.—In all theſe ſolemnities we ſhould look unto Jeſus, as the great ſacrifice for ſin, the true Paſchal Lamb, (Notes, *Exod.* xii;) the firſt-fruits unto God, our forerunner to glory; the proviſion for our ſouls; the fountain of grace, from whoſe fulneſs the Holy Spirit flows to all his people; the ſource of our joy, our heavenly hope, and our victory over the world.—But eſpecially, we have here an abſtract of the life of faith, and the walk with God.—Being called from the ſervice of Satan, and from a worldly ſenſual life, the true penitent begins his courſe with the ſprinkling of the Saviour's blood, by the exerciſe and profeſſion of faith in him.—In godly ſorrow, ſelf-denial, and bearing the croſs, whilſt he purges out the old leaven of malice and wickedneſs, he feaſts upon the paſſover before God, with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth; he taſtes the firſt-fruits of heavenly joy, and offers the firſt-fruits of heavenly adoration; yea preſents himſelf and all he has, to be as the firſt-fruits unto God, conſecrated to his glory. That law, which was given from mount Sinai, written on tables of ſtone, and lodged in the ark of the covenant (as an emblem of its being honoured in the Saviour's life and death,) he now deſires to have written in his heart, by that Spirit which was given to the apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians on the day of Pentecoſt; and he has his deſire granted, and his prayer anſwered. Still however, the trumpet of the goſpel, though a joyful ſound, often reminds him to renew his repentance, to afflict his ſoul, and to apply the atonement. And indeed they, who do not thus afflict their ſouls for ſin, ſhall be cut off from among the people, notwithſtanding the atonement and their profeſſed belief of it. But mourning for ſin makes way for heavenly joy; and from his depth of humiliation, the Chriſtian ſoars nearer heaven, and leaves the world further and further beneath. A ſtranger and pilgrim here below, his home and heart are above; where his Saviour, who once tabernacled on earth, now in human nature dwells in glory: and as his aſſurance increaſes of "a building not made with hands eternal in the hea-"vens," he becomes deſirous of departing hence, and being "with Chriſt which is far better:" for though he has holy feaſts from time to time on earth, yet they ſuffer many interruptions, and have much alloy; and he expects fulneſs of joy at God's right hand for evermore. Now may the God of all grace prepare the heart of the writer and readers of theſe obſervations, for this ſelf ſame thing, and give us the earneſt of his Spirit, through Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

NOTES.

6 And thou ſhalt ſet them in two rows, ſix on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.
7 And thou ſhalt put pure frankincenſe upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.
8 Every ſabbath he ſhall ſet it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Iſrael by an everlaſting covenant.
9 And it ſhall be Aaron's and his ſons, and they ſhall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* moſt holy unto him, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual ſtatute.
10 And the ſon of an Iſraelitiſh woman, whoſe father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Iſrael; and this ſon of the Iſraelitiſh *woman* and a man of Iſrael ſtrove together in the camp;
11 And the Iſraelitiſh woman's ſon blaſphemed the name *of the LORD*, and curſed: and they brought him unto Moſes; (and his mother's name *was* Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)
12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be ſhewed them.
13 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
14 Bring forth him that hath curſed, without the camp; and let all that heard *him* lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation ſtone him.
15 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Whoſoever curſeth his God ſhall bear his ſin.
16 And he that blaſphemeth the name of the LORD, he ſhall ſurely be put to death, *and* all the congregation ſhall certainly ſtone him: as well the ſtranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blaſphemeth the name *of the LORD*, ſhall be put to death.
17 And he that killeth any man ſhall ſurely be put to death.
18 And he that killeth a beaſt ſhall make it good; beaſt for beaſt.
19 And if a man cauſe a blemiſh in his neighbour; as he hath done, ſo ſhall it be done to him:
20 Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath cauſed a blemiſh in a man, ſo ſhall it be done to him *again*.
21 And he that killeth a beaſt, he ſhall reſtore it: and he that killeth a man, he ſhall be put to death.
22 Ye ſhall have one manner of law, as well for the ſtranger, as for one of your own country: for I *am* the LORD your God.
23 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] Ver. 5—9.] Theſe loaves of bread, one for each tribe, thus preſented before the Lord every week, and afterwards eaten by the prieſts, may typify Chriſt, as the Bread of life and the continual food of the ſouls of his people, having offered himſelf unto God for them. Or they may denote the ſervices of believers, preſented before God through him, and accepted for his ſake. Or the whole may mean the communion, betwixt our reconciled Father and his adopted children in Chriſt Jeſus; who, as it were, feaſt at the ſame table, whilſt *He* delights in the fruits of his Spirit in their hearts, and *they* are feaſted with his love. The frankincenſe placed upon each loaf for a memorial, and then burnt upon the altar (ii. 2,) may denote either the advocacy of Chriſt, or the ſweet influences of his Spirit, which are a memorial to the Lord to enſure the acceptance of the believer's perſon and ſervices. This would be a ſweet ſavour unto God, whilſt the bread would be ſerviceable to the prieſts; which applies both to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, as honourable to God and beneficial to man, and to the good works of his people. (*Eph.* v. 2. *Phil.* iv. 18.)

V. 11. *Blaſphemed the name*, &c.] It is ſuppoſed that, by reaſon of the diſpute betwixt this man, and the Iſraelite, he was brought before the magiſtrates, and the cauſe was by the law of God decided againſt him: and, in conſequence, that he blaſphemed, or curſed Him, before whoſe tremendous name all heaven adores and all hell trembles: the words, *of the Lord*, are added in the tranſlation, but with a ſort of ſolemn reverence are omitted in the original, as if the penman ſcrupled to mention whoſe name it was, that he blaſphemed. (15, 16). This blaſphemer's name is not mentioned; for he, who thus treated the holy name of God, was not diſtinguiſhed by having his vile name written in the ſacred Scripture.

V. 14. *Lay their hands*, &c.] As ſolemnly perſevering in their teſtimony, and as devoting the blaſphemer to death, that the guilt of ſuch a crime might not reſt on Iſrael; and avowing that his blood was upon his own head, and that all the reſt were clear.

V. 17—22.] This affair occaſioned a third interruption in giving the law, and theſe precepts are here repeated on occaſion of the conteſt with this ſon of a ſtranger; as the foregoing ſtatute was enacted on occaſion of his blaſphemy. (15, 16.)

PRACTICAL

23 And Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, that they ſhould bring forth him that had curſed out of the camp, and ſtone him with ſtones: and the children of Iſrael did as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1ſt. The appointment of the ſabbatical year, 1—7. *2d. That of the year of jubilee, with various laws relating to it,* 8—55.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes in mount Sinai, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then ſhall the land keep a ſabbath unto the LORD.

3 Six years thou ſhalt ſow thy field, and ſix years thou ſhalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

4 But in the ſeventh year ſhall be a ſabbath of reſt unto the land, a ſabbath for the LORD, thou ſhalt neither ſow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harveſt thou ſhalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undreſſed: *for* it is a year of reſt unto the land.

6 And the ſabbath of the land ſhall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy ſervant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired ſervant, and for thy ſtranger that ſojourneth with thee,

7 And for thy cattle, and for the beaſts that *are* in thy land, ſhall all the increaſe thereof be meat.

8 And thou ſhalt number ſeven ſabbaths of years unto thee, ſeven times ſeven years, and the ſpace of the ſeven ſabbaths of years ſhall be unto thee forty and nine years.

9 Then

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jeſus Chriſt is the Light of his church, yea the Light of the world: in and through his word He ſhines; and his miniſters in opening and alledging, in reaſoning and perſuading from the Scriptures, tend and order the light, which, by the influences of his Spirit, illuminates the minds of men unto ſalvation. But the people, who enjoy and value this light, muſt defray the expences of it, and contribute chearfully towards its ſhining brighter and wider, and continuing to future generations: and they muſt be ſpoken to for this purpoſe, if not ready of themſelves. By this light we ſhall diſcern the ſpiritual food prepared for our ſouls, firſt preſented to the Father, and then diſtributed to us; and ſhall daily, but eſpecially from ſabbath to ſabbath, 'feed on it in our hearts by faith with thankſgiving:' and in conſequence ſhall exerciſe grace well pleaſing unto the Lord, and perform good works very profitable to his people, which will again "abound in many thankſgivings "unto God," (2 *Cor.* ix. 11—14.) Thus we ſhall have "fellowſhip with the Father, with his Son Jeſus Chriſt," and with the brethren, by the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, and at laſt ſhall all be "preſented before the preſence "of his glory with exceeding joy."—Unequal marriages produce fatal effects even to poſterity; and contentions betw xt men often iſſue in blaſphemies againſt God: yet profligate manners give riſe to wholeſome laws. But how wicked ſoever men are, nothing muſt be done againſt them unadviſedly, or without conſulting the mind and will of God, as now completely made known to us in his holy word. And it is his will that ſtrangers, or thoſe of another religion, ſhould neither be oppreſſed, nor allowed to commit wickedneſs with impunity; but in this reſpect be treated as other members of ſociety.—Blaſphemy againſt God is in its own nature more heinous than murder; and though it frequently eſcape unpuniſhed by man, yet it ſhall by no means eſcape the righteous vengeance of God.—The ſolemn and public execution of daring offenders not only ſets a ſalutary example, but purges away national guilt; and every member of ſociety is bound to concur in his place in bringing ſuch perſons to juſtice; yet ſo that it be done with the utmoſt caution, and that they bear no teſtimony which they cannot ſtand to. What enmity againſt God muſt be in the heart of man, when curſes and blaſphemies againſt him proceed out of his mouth! And if he that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy; of what puniſhment will they be thought worthy, who deſpiſe, and abuſe the goſpel of the Son of God! Let us learn then to watch againſt anger; to do no evil, but only good to all men, eſpecially to the houſehold of faith; to avoid all improper connections with wicked people, and to reverence habitually that worthy name which ſinners blaſpheme.

NOTES.

CHAP XXV.] V. 1—7.] The obſervance of this ſabbatical year might be intended to impreſs the minds of the people more forcibly with the obligation of the weekly ſabbath, and to afford all of them more leiſure for the ſtudy of the law and the buſineſs of religion; as well as give the poor ſome relaxation from their labours, and an acquiſition to their enjoyments. The people were thus taught to live by faith in God's providence, to receive their ſupply from his hand, and to be generous in the uſe of it. They were likewiſe reminded of the life of paradiſe, before ſin had laid men under the ſentence of eating bread by the ſweat of their brow; and the inſtitution might typify the believer's reſt of ſoul in Chriſt by faith on earth, and the reſt of heaven. (Note, *Exod.* xxiii. 11.)

V. 9.

9 Then ſhalt thou cauſe the trumpet of the jubilee to ſound, on the tenth *day* of the ſeventh month; in the day of atonement ſhall ye make the trumpet ſound throughout all your land.

10 And ye ſhall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it ſhall be a jubilee unto you: and ye ſhall return every man unto his poſſeſſion, and ye ſhall return every man unto his family.

11 A jubilee ſhall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye ſhall not ſow, neither reap that which groweth of itſelf in it, nor gather *the grapes* in it of thy vine undreſſed.

12 For it *is* the jubilee, it ſhall be holy unto you: ye ſhall eat the increaſe thereof out of the field.

13 In the year of this jubilee ye ſhall return every man unto his poſſeſſion.

14 And if thou ſell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyeſt *ought* of thy neighbour's hand, ye ſhall not oppreſs one another.

15 According to the number of years after the jubilee thou ſhalt buy of thy neighbour, *and* according unto the number of years of the fruits he ſhall ſell unto thee:

16 According to the multitude of years thou ſhalt increaſe the price thereof, and according to the fewneſs of years thou ſhalt diminiſh the price of it: for *according* to the number *of the years* of the fruits doth he ſell unto thee.

17 Ye ſhall not therefore oppreſs one another, but thou ſhalt fear thy God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

18 Wherefore ye ſhall do my ſtatutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye ſhall dwell in the land in ſafety.

19 And the land ſhall yield her fruit, and ye ſhall eat your fill, and dwell therein in ſafety.

20 And if ye ſhall ſay, What ſhall we eat the ſeventh year? behold, we ſhall not ſow, nor gather in our increaſe:

21 Then I will command my bleſſing upon you in the ſixth year, and it ſhall bring forth fruit for three years.

22 And ye ſhall ſow the eighth year, and eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye ſhall eat *of* the old *ſtore*.

23 The land ſhall not be ſold for ever: for the land *is* mine, for ye *are* ſtrangers and ſojourners with me.

24 And in all the land of your poſſeſſion, ye ſhall grant a redemption for the land.

25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath ſold away *ſome* of his poſſeſſion, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then ſhall he redeem that which his brother ſold.

26 And

V. 9. *Of the jubilee*, &c.] The word rendered *Jubilee* denotes ſome peculiarly ſonorous or animated ſound of the ſilver trumpets; (*Num.* x.) This ſound was made on the evening of the great day of atonement; for the proclamation of goſpel liberty and ſalvation reſults from the ſacrifice of the Redeemer.

V. 10. *Fiftieth year*, &c.] This expreſſion ſeems abſolutely to decide that the year of jubilee was not the ſame with the ſeventh ſabbatical year, but the year afterwards, that is the *fiftieth* and not the *forty-ninth year:* and the only objection of any weight, which can be urged againſt this opinion, namely, the difficulty of the nation ſubſiſting for two years without ſowing their ground, is afterwards obviated, (21, 22.) This inſtitution would form a ſuitable trial of the people's faith, and afford the Lord a proper occaſion of ſhewing his power and faithfulneſs, whenever they obſerved it: but we have reaſon to think that this was but ſeldom; for we read little or nothing of the year of jubilee after it's inſtitution.

V. 13. *Ye ſhall return*, &c.] Thus it was provided that the lands ſhould not be alienated from the families to which they were aſſigned by lot; for they could only be diſpoſed of by leaſes, at a proportionable price, until the year of jubilee, and muſt then return either to the ſeller if living, or to his next heir. This would preſerve their tribes and families, and conſequently the genealogies, diſtinct, until the coming of the Meſſiah: it would alſo prevent the amaſſing of exorbitant wealth by ſome, and the extreme poverty of others, and promote a brotherly equality among them.

V. 20—22.] The ſabbatical year would commence from the finiſhing of the harveſt and vintage in the ſixth year: in the cloſe of the eighth year, (or the year of jubilee,) according to their civil computation, when two full years had paſſed without ſowing or reaping, the people were directed to make preparation for the harveſt in the ninth year: and it was expreſsly promiſed that the fruits of the ſixth year ſhould not only ſuffice for the ſabbatical year, but for the year of jubilee, and till the crop was ripe in the following year. As the ſixth year would bring forth fruits for *three* years, and not merely for *two*; it is evident that both the ſabbatical year and the year of jubilee were diſtinctly provided for.

V. 25—28.] The neareſt relation ought to have the firſt

26 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himſelf be able to redeem it:

27 Then let him count the years of the ſale thereof, and reſtore the overplus unto the man to whom he ſold it, that he may return unto his poſſeſſion.

28 But if he be not able to reſtore *it* to him, then that which is ſold ſhall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it ſhall go out, and he ſhall return unto his poſſeſſion.

29 And if a man ſell a dwelling-houſe in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is ſold: *within* a full year may he redeem it.

30 And if it be not redeemed within the ſpace of a full year, then the houſe that *is* in the walled city, ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations: it ſhall not go out in the jubilee.

31 But the houſes of the villages which have no walls round about them ſhall be counted as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they ſhall go out in the jubilee.

32 Notwithſtanding the cities of the Levites, *and* the houſes of the cities of their poſſeſſion, may the Levites redeem at any time.

33 And if a man purchaſe of the Levites, then the houſe that was ſold, and the city of his poſſeſſion ſhall go out in the *year of* jubilee: for the houſes of the cities of the Levites *are* their poſſeſſion among the children of Iſrael.

34 But the field of the ſuburbs of their cities may not be ſold; for it *is* their perpetual poſſeſſion.

35 And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou ſhalt relieve him: *yea, though he be* a ſtranger, or a ſojourner; that he may live with thee.

36 Take thou no uſury of him, or increaſe: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.

37 Thou ſhalt not give him thy money upon uſury, nor lend him thy victuals for increaſe.

38 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God.

39 And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be ſold unto thee; thou ſhalt not compel him to ſerve as a bond-ſervant:

40 *But* as an hired ſervant, *and* as a ſojourner, he ſhall be with thee, *and* ſhall ſerve thee unto the year of jubilee.

41 And *then* ſhall he depart from thee, *both* he and his children with him, and ſhall return unto his own family, and unto the poſſeſſion of his fathers ſhall he return.

42 For they *are* my ſervants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they ſhall not be ſold as bond-men.

43 Thou ſhalt not rule over him with rigour, but ſhalt fear thy God.

44 Both

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refuſal of the lands which were to be ſold: but if another had bought them, the kinſman had a right to redeem them at the ſame price, deducting for the time during which the purchaſer had enjoyed them: and he was in that caſe appointed to keep them for the proprietor till the year of jubilee, (*Ruth* iv. 6—9. *Jerem.* xxxii. 7—14.) Or if the ſeller afterwards were able, he might redeem his eſtate: otherwiſe it continued until the year of jubilee, when it returned to him or his family freely. This typified Chriſt, our Brother and Redeemer, who ranſoms our loſt inheritance, and will keep it for us till the day of our death, or rather till the day of judgment, when he will reſtore it free unto us: whereas that of the wicked will be forfeited for ever.

V. 29, 30.] The houſes in cities and walled towns did not mark the diſtinction of families; they were built with labour and expence, and were not the inheritance of fathers; they would alſo want continual repair, and would undergo great alterations in a little time. As theſe houſes were eſpecially uſeful for commerce, this allowance would encourage ſtrangers to come and ſettle among the Iſraelites.

V. 35—38.] (Note, *Exod.* xxii. 25—27.) When an Iſraelite was reduced to poverty, and lived among his brethren, as a ſtranger and ſojourner, without any poſſeſſion or inheritance, they muſt remember to treat him as a brother.

V. 39—43.] When a man was ſold for ſome debt or fraud for which he could not make reſtitution, he was liberated at the end of ſeven years. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* xxi. 1—6.) But if he voluntarily ſold himſelf without limitation of time; or through poverty, love to his maſter, or his wife and children, had refuſed liberty at the end of ſeven years; and perhaps if he were ſold for ſome larger debt or greater crime; he continued a ſervant for life, unleſs the year of jubilee intervened: when he was ſet at liberty, and returned with his family to his inheritance. In the mean time

44 Both thy bond-men, and thy bond-maids, which thou ſhalt have, *ſhall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them ſhall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids.

45 Moreover of the children of the ſtrangers that do ſojourn among you, of them ſhall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they ſhall be your poſſeſſion.

46 And ye ſhall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them for* a poſſeſſion; they ſhall be your bond-men for ever: but over your brethren, the children of Iſrael, ye ſhall not rule one over another with rigour.

47 And if a ſojourner or ſtranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and ſell himſelf unto the ſtranger *or* ſojourner by thee, or to the ſtock of the ſtranger's family:

48 After that he is ſold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him:

49 Either his uncle, or his uncle's ſon, may redeem him, or *any* that is nigh of kin unto him, of his family, may redeem him: or, if he be able, he may redeem himſelf.

50 And he ſhall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was ſold to him, unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his ſale ſhall be according unto the number of years; according to the time of an hired ſervant ſhall it be with him.

51 If *there be* yet many years *behind*, according unto them he ſhall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for.

52 And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he ſhall count with him, *and* according unto his years ſhall he give him again the price of his redemption.

53 *And* as a yearly hired ſervant ſhall he be with him: and *the other* ſhall not rule with rigour over him in thy ſight.

54 And if he be not redeemed in theſe *years*, then he ſhall go out in the year of jubilee, *both* he, and his children with him.

55 For unto me the children of Iſrael *are* ſervants; they *are* my ſervants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAP.

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time he might not be treated with rigour as a ſlave, but with kindneſs as an hired ſervant.

V. 44—46.] This might be *permitted* in order to typify, that none but the true Iſrael of God participate of that liberty, with which Chriſt hath made his people free. (Note, *Exod.* xxi. 2.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a deſirable privilege to have ſeaſons of relaxation from worldly care and employments, that we may have more leiſure for the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and the concerns of our ſouls. The poor labourer alſo ſhould be allowed them; and our hearts ſhould rejoice to ſee him refreſhed from his toil, and enjoying the fruits of our liberality. All theſe ſtatutes preach to us, "to beware of covet-"ouſneſs; for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance "of his poſſeſſions;" to exerciſe willing dependence on God's providence for our ſupport; to be contented with, and thankful for, food and raiment; to conſider ourſelves as the Lord's tenants and ſtewards, if we have land or poſſeſſions, and to uſe them accordingly; and not only to be moderate and temperate in our enjoyments, but kind and gentle to our inferiors, ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate to our poor brethren, after his example, "who, though he were rich, yet for our ſakes "became poor, that we through his poverty might be "rich."—He is our Redeemer, and aſſumed our nature, that he might ranſom our ſouls from Satan's bondage, into which we had been ſold for the debts we had contracted, and for the crimes we had committed; nay into which we had fooliſhly ſold ourſelves, through our love of ſinful pleaſures: and that, together with our liberty, he might alſo redeem our forfeited and waſted inheritance, without which we muſt otherwiſe have ſpent eternity in moſt miſerable want. Having paid the ranſom, and entered into poſſeſſion of the inheritance in our behalf, and in virtue of his atonement; he, by the goſpel's joyful ſound, from age to age, proclaims "liberty to the captive, and the "opening of the priſon to thoſe that are bound:" accompanying this proclamation by his powerful grace, he ſets his people at liberty, which they enjoy, together with reſt for their ſouls, and the earneſt of heaven, through faith in him and obedience to him. When they die, their ſouls aſcend to heavenly reſt; and ere long the laſt trump ſhall ſound the jubilee of the reſurrection, "the redemption "of the body," (*Rom.* viii. 23;) and they ſhall be then put in final and eternal poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance to the praiſe of his glory: whilſt the wicked will ſink into the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. We cannot ranſom our own ſouls, or our forfeited inheritance: but let us not neglect ſuch great ſalvation, ſo freely propoſed, and the fruit of ſuch love and of ſuch ſufferings. We cannot ranſom our fellow ſinners: but we may point out, and recommend Chriſt to them; and by his grace our holy lives may adorn his goſpel, expreſs our love and gratitude, and glorify his holy name.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. A repetition of the laws prohibiting idolatry, and requiring regard to the Lord's ſabbaths and ſanctuary, 1, 2. *2d. Promiſes to the people whilſt they continued obedient,* 3—13. *3d. Judgments threatened in caſe of diſobedience, and as long as they perſiſted in it,* 14—39. *4th. Encouraging promiſes to them, if at length they repented,* 40—46.

YE ſhall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a ſtanding image, neither ſhall ye ſet up *any* image of ſtone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the Lord your God.

2 Ye ſhall keep my ſabbaths, and reverence my ſanctuary: I *am* the Lord.

3 If ye walk in my ſtatutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

4 Then I will give you rain in due ſeaſon, and the land ſhall yield her increaſe, and the trees of the field ſhall yield their fruit.

5 And your threſhing ſhall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage ſhall reach unto the ſowing-time: and ye ſhall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land ſafely.

6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye ſhall lie down, and none ſhall make *you* afraid: and I will rid evil beaſts out of the land, neither ſhall the ſword go through your land.

7 And ye ſhall chaſe your enemies, and they ſhall fall before you by the ſword.

8 And five of you ſhall chaſe an hundred, and an hundred of you ſhall put ten thouſand to flight; and your enemies ſhall fall before you by the ſword.

9 For I will have reſpect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and eſtabliſh my covenant with you.

10 And ye ſhall eat old ſtore, and bring forth the old becauſe of the new.

11 And I will ſet my tabernacle among you: and my ſoul ſhall not abhor you.

12 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 4. *I will give you rain*, &c.] Theſe promiſes to Iſrael, in caſe they were obedient, ſhould be underſtood with a ſpecial reference to their national covenant. Whilſt they maintained a *national* regard to God's worſhip, ſabbaths, and ſanctuary, and did not turn aſide to idolatry; the Lord engaged to continue to them theſe temporal mercies and diſtinguiſhing religious advantages. (11—13.) Even among the Iſraelites, individuals were not uniformly proſperous or afflicted, according to their obedience or diſobedience: nay the contrary was ſo commonly the caſe, that the prophets and the Pſalmiſt, in ſeveral places, ſpeak of it as their temptation; (Notes, &c. *Pſ.* lxxiii. *Jer.* xii. 1, 2.) and the royal preacher declares, "that all things come alike to all," (*Eccleſ.* ix. 1, 2.) But national proſperity was uniformly the effect of national obedience, and national judgments the reſult of national wickedneſs. Though Iſrael was under a peculiar covenant, and no other people is governed exactly according to the ſame rule; yet ſtill God deals with nations as collective bodies: nothing but national regard to religion and righteouſneſs can enſure national proſperity; and national wickedneſs will end in the ruin of any people, eſpecially where the word of God and the light of the goſpel are afforded. Individuals will exiſt, and be judged and recompenſed, in a future world: but bodies politic will have no future exiſtence, and are therefore recompenſed in this world. Concerning individual Chriſtians, it is enough to ſay, that the Lord will afford them as much temporal proſperity, as his infinite wiſdom ſees good for them; that either from within or without, their comforts ſhall be proportioned to the ſimplicity and exactneſs of the obedience which ſprings from faith and love; and that they frequently experience the Lord's care of them and kindneſs to them in his providence, and in anſwer to their prayers, whether according to the letter of ſuch temporal promiſes or not. Their obedience has a natural tendency to exempt them from a variety of miſeries which others endure; and to ſecure them many comforts of body, mind, and circumſtances, which others enjoy not: their croſſes and afflictions are all needful and uſeful, ſanctified to them, and counterbalanced by inward peace: and upon the whole, they have even in this world, including their heavenly hope, by far the largeſt proportion of true felicity, notwithſtanding all the tribulation and perſecution they endure, the ſelf-denial they exerciſe, and the correction of their Father's love.—Theſe promiſes may alſo be conſidered as typical of the *ſpiritual* proſperity, health, peace, and victory, with which the Lord favours his believing people, when walking in his ways; and of the bleſſings which his church enjoys.

V. 5. *Your threſhing*, &c.] Large crops of corn would keep the people conſtantly employed, and conſequently well provided for all the year round. This is by ſome conſidered as an emblem of the plentiful increaſe given to the ſeed of the word, in the days of the apoſtles, and in the primitive times of Chriſtianity. (*Amos* ix. 13.)

V. 10. *Bring forth the old*, &c.] This promiſe intimated, that the people ought not, and would not be diſpoſed, to build new barns in which to hoard their plenty, as the rich fooliſh man did, (*Luke* xii. 15—21;) but would bring it forth to make room for the new, and ſo diſpoſe of it at a low price, or freely to the poor and needy; having a liberal heart, as well as an abundant proviſion.

V. 11,

12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.

13 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye ſhould not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all theſe commandments;

15 And if ye ſhall deſpiſe my ſtatutes, or if your ſoul abhor my judgments, ſo that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye break my covenant;

16 I alſo will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror, conſumption, and the burning ague, that ſhall conſume the eyes, and cauſe ſorrow of heart: and ye ſhall ſow your ſeed in vain; for your enemies ſhall eat it.

17 And I will ſet my face againſt you, and ye ſhall be ſlain before your enemies: they that hate you ſhall reign over you; and ye ſhall flee when none purſueth you.

18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.

19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as braſs.

20 And your ſtrength ſhall be ſpent in vain: for your land ſhall not yield her increaſe, neither ſhall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring ſeven times more plagues upon you, according to your ſins.

22 I will alſo ſend wild beaſts among you, which ſhall rob you of your children, and deſtroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your *high*-ways ſhall be deſolate.

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by theſe things, but will walk contrary unto me,

24 Then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will puniſh you yet ſeven times for your ſins.

25 And I will bring a ſword upon you, that ſhall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will ſend the peſtilence among you; and ye ſhall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26 *And* when I have broken the ſtaff of your bread, ten women ſhall bake your bread in one oven, and they ſhall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye ſhall eat, and not be ſatisfied.

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

28 Then I will walk contrary unto you alſo in fury: and I, even I, will chaſtiſe you ſeven times for your ſins.

29 And ye ſhall eat the fleſh of your ſons, and the fleſh of your daughters ſhall ye eat.

30 And I will deſtroy your high places, and cut down your images, and caſt your carcaſes upon the carcaſes of your idols, and my ſoul ſhall abhor you.

31 And

V. 11, 12.] The continuance of God's ordinances amongſt the Iſraelites was the chief of theſe promiſes: but it was but a ſhadow of the privilege of every true believer; (2 *Cor.* vi. 18.) The expreſſion *My ſoul ſhall not abhor you*, is remarkable; and implies that it was an act of mere mercy that ſo holy a God did not *abhor* the fellowſhip of ſuch ſinners, as they were when moſt obedient; and that if they were rebellious he would *abhor* them. (30—44.) In the days of Joſhua, of ſome of the judges, of David and Solomon, and ſome of their ſucceſſors, theſe prophetical promiſes had their accompliſhment: and indeed this chapter and the twenty-eighth of *Deuteronomy*, are a prophetical abſtract of the future hiſtory of Iſrael even to this day; and it is not yet fully accompliſhed.

V. 19. *Your heaven*, &c.] The heavens ſhould no more give rain, than if they were iron; nor the earth any more yield corn than if it were braſs; which would effectually break the pride of Iſrael's power. This had a remarkable accompliſhment in the long famine foretold by Elijah, in the time of Ahab, (1 *Kings* xvii. xviii.)

V. 24. *Yet ſeven times*, &c.] The Lord would render their miſeries ſtill more and more dreadful: like Nebuchadnezzar's attempt, by making the furnace ſeven times hotter than uſual, to increaſe the torture of the objects of his vengeance; (*Dan.* iii. 19.) But this was a mere impotent fooliſh effort. While the Lord was able to accompliſh his denunciations, however aweful.

V. 29. *Ye ſhall eat the fleſh*, &c.] This was literally fulfilled in the ſiege of Samaria by Benhadad, (2 *Kings* vi. 28, 29;) in the ſiege of Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans, (*Lam.* iv. 10;) and in the laſt ſiege of Jeruſalem by the Romans, as recorded by their own hiſtorian, Joſephus.

31 And I will make your cities waſte, and bring your ſanctuaries unto deſolation, and I will not ſmell the ſavour of your ſweet odours.

32 And I will bring the land into deſolation; and your enemies which dwell therein ſhall be aſtoniſhed at it.

33 And I will ſcatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a ſword after you; and your land ſhall be deſolate, and your cities waſte.

34 Then ſhall the land enjoy her ſabbaths as long as it lieth deſolate, and ye *be* in your enemies' land; *even* then ſhall the land reſt, and enjoy her ſabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth deſolate, it ſhall reſt; becauſe it did not reſt in your ſabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

36 And upon them that are left *alive* of you, I will ſend a faintneſs into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the ſound of a ſhaken leaf ſhall chaſe them; and they ſhall flee, as fleeing from a ſword; and they ſhall fall when none purſueth.

37 And they ſhall fall one upon another, as it were before a ſword, when none purſueth: and ye ſhall have no power to ſtand before your enemies.

38 And ye ſhall periſh among the heathen, and the land of your enemies ſhall eat you up.

39 And they that are left of you ſhall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and alſo in the iniquities of their fathers ſhall they pine away with them.

40 If they ſhall confeſs their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their treſpaſs which they treſpaſſed againſt me, and that alſo they have walked contrary unto me;

41 And *that* I alſo have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity:

42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and alſo my covenant with Iſaac, and alſo my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

43 The

V. 31. *I will not ſmell*, &c.] The Lord would no longer regard the burning of incenſe, or ſacrifices, though they preſerved the form of godlineſs among the people; (*Iſaiah*, i. 11—15. lxvi. 3.)

V. 34, 35.] This was fulfilled in the Babyloniſh captivity; and is a prediction of the ſin of Iſrael as well as of their puniſhment, which ſhews that they ſcarcely ever regarded the appointments of the foregoing chapter; (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 21.)

V. 39. *In the iniquities of their*, &c.] The people would lie under the load of guilt, which had been accumulating for ages, ſo long as they continued impenitent in *their own* tranſgreſſions, and would pine away in deſpair of redreſs till brought to repent and ſubmit to God.

V. 40. *If they ſhall confeſs*, &c.] Thus previouſly to the deliverance of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity, we find Daniel, (and doubtleſs numbers concurred with him,) confeſſing his ſins and thoſe of his people before the Lord in deep humiliation, (*Dan.* ix.) And afterwards previouſly to their further eſtabliſhment in Judea, we find Ezra and Nehemiah, and the people with them, doing the ſame; and in language which ſeems evidently to refer to this chapter; (*Ezra.* ix. *Neh.* ix.)

V 41—45.] Pride, impenitency, love of ſin, and enmity to Jehovah and his worſhip, proved the hearts of the people to be *uncircumciſed*, that is *unrenewed by divine grace:* when this change took place they would be humbled before God, and acknowledge his juſtice in all their ſufferings; they would ſeek forgiveneſs from his mercy, and be diſpoſed to return to their duty: then would he remember and deal with them according to the covenant made with their fathers. A glorious accompliſhment of this part of the prophecy may hereafter be expected, in the converſion of the Jews to Chriſt: as many of the aweful threatenings of this chapter ſeem to be expreſs predictions of the preſent diſperſion of the Jews, which has continued above 1700 years; and as they ſtill are marvellouſly preſerved a diſtinct people and *pine away in unrepented wickedneſs*, eſpecially for the crucifixion and perſevering rejection of their promiſed Meſſiah. (*Rom.* xi. 25—28.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our true intereſt and happineſs conſiſt in worſhipping the Lord, giving him our hearts, hallowing his ſabbaths, reverencing his ſanctuary; and doing every thing with a believing regard to that Saviour, "in whom dwelleth all "the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." It is true our obedience cannot juſtify us: but that obedience, which takes its riſe from repentance towards God, and faith in and love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and conſiſts in an humble attendance on the ordinances, and an unreſerved obedience to the commandments of the Lord, will both evince that we are juſtified, and have peace with Him, and will induce peace and ſpiritual conſolations into our hearts, with the hope of glory, and the bleſſing of God upon our families and poſſeſſions: ſo that the moſt afflicted ſtate of ſuch a Chriſtian ſhall be more comfortable than any ungodly proſperity. This frame of mind is the health of the ſoul, and the antepaſt of heaven; whilſt God ſets up his tabernacle in us, and dwells and walks with us, as the ſure pledge of eternal glory. But wilful ſin, even in a believer, will grieve the Spirit, cloud this bright proſpect, and bring darkneſs and diſtreſs into the ſoul, as well as

chaſtiſements

43 The land alſo ſhall be left of them, and ſhall enjoy her ſabbaths, while ſhe lieth deſolate without them: and they ſhall accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity; becauſe, even becauſe they deſpiſed my judgments, and becauſe their ſoul abhorred my ſtatutes.

44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not caſt them away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the LORD their God.

45 But I will for their ſakes remember the covenant of their anceſtors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the ſight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

46 Theſe *are* the ſtatutes, and judgments, and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Iſrael in mount Sinai, by the hand of Moſes.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains laws concerning ſingular vows, or dedicating to God, 1ſt. Perſons, 1—8. *2d. Cattle,* 9—13. *3d. Houſes and lands,* 14—25. *4th. That firſtlings were not thus to be dedicated,* 26, 27. *5th. Of things devoted to deſtruction,* 28, 29. *6th. Concerning tithes, &c.* 30—34.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, 2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When a man ſhall make a ſingular vow, the perſons *ſhall be* for the LORD by thy eſtimation.

3 And thy eſtimation ſhall be, of the male from twenty years old even unto ſixty years old,

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chaſtiſements from his heavenly Father's rod.—Righteouſneſs alſo exalteth a nation, and, amongſt other bleſſings, enſures the continuance of the goſpel with it. But it is truly wonderful that the Lord hath not long ſince ſo *abhorred* this our ſinful land, as to deprive us of our other manifold mercies, and eſpecially of his deſpiſed and abuſed word of ſalvation! Sooner or later, however, ſin will be the ruin, as well as reproach of every people: and our *national* violation of God's ſabbaths, contempt of his ordinances, oppoſition to his truths, and abhorrence of his commandments; after our manifold rebukes, dangers, and deliverances, which were intended to bring us to repentance and upright obedience, have a very gloomy aſpect on this yet favoured land. If we continue ſtill to walk contrary to God, we may expect that he will puniſh us ſeven times, yea ſeventy times ſeven, more than thoſe late checks of which we ſo loudly complained; and that he will avenge the quarrel of his goſpel upon us: and if He who has all creatures in his hand, as miniſters of his vengeance by which to fight againſt his enemies, ſhould ſet his face againſt us, who can conjecture where it will end? Oh! that, being deeply humbled before God and ingenuouſly confeſſing our ſins, we might by a general revival of religion and reformation of manners, with the harmonious concurrence of all ranks and orders of men, avert the riſing ſtorm before it burſt upon us! But though *national* judgments, ſuch as deſolating war, peſtilence, and famine, be dreadful; yet they are but *temporal* evils: perſonal judgments alone are *eternal*: let every ſinner then tremble for himſelf, take warning and flee from the wrath to come.—The career of iniquity commences in contempt of God's ſtatutes, and hatred of his ſervice: ingratitude and abuſe of his mercies ſoon iſſue in the hardening of the heart under afflictions, and againſt convictions. Such perſons walking contrary to God, will find that he walks contrary to them: and as they turn their face from him; he will ſet his face againſt them, will abhor them, purſue them with one miſery after another, and at length utterly deſtroy them if they continue impenitent: and the ſtouteſt of them will find their hearts wax faint and tremble, and perceive that they have no power to reſiſt or eſcape, when he ariſes to execute vengeance.—But if at length any poor ſinner be deeply humbled, and confeſs his guilt, and cry for mercy through faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and according to the covenant made with ſinners in him; God will remember that covenant, and pardon that ſinner according to the multitude of his mercies: ſo that none need deſpair, and pine away in their iniquities. Whilſt we joyfully avail ourſelves of ſuch a precious privilege; and are confirmed in our faith by the deſolate and diſperſed condition of the diſobedient Iſraelites: let us not abhor and deſpiſe them; but compaſſionate and pray for them that they may at length be remembered according to the covenant made with their fathers. And let us take warning not to imitate their infidelity, and not to truſt in external diſtinctions. God grant that we may in this our day conſider the things which belong to our eternal peace.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 2—8.] By theſe vows the Iſraelites upon many occaſions might be diſpoſed to dedicate themſelves, or their children, to the immediate ſervice of the Lord in the ſanctuary for life: but as the prieſts and Levites were ſet apart by God himſelf for that ſervice, and none were allowed to interfere with their work, ſuch vows were not greatly encouraged. The Gibeonites were afterwards employed "as hewers of wood and drawers of "water," for the tabernacle; and perhaps ſome others, who refuſed to redeem themſelves, performed menial ſervices, as aſſiſtants to the prieſts and Levites. Probably theſe as well as the Gibeonites, were called *Nethinim*, or dedicated perſons, of whom we ſhall read hereafter. Samuel was thus dedicated by his mother; (1 *Sam.* i. 11. 24—28;) and not being redeemed, he was employed about the

old, even thy eſtimation ſhall be fifty ſhekels of ſilver, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary.

4 And if *it be* a female, then thy eſtimation ſhall be thirty ſhekels.

5 And if *it be* from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy eſtimation ſhall be of the male twenty ſhekels, and for the female ten ſhekels.

6 And if *it be* from a month old even unto five years old, then thy eſtimation ſhall be of the male five ſhekels of ſilver, and for the female thy eſtimation *ſhall be* three ſhekels of ſilver.

7 And if *it be* from ſixty years old and above; if *it be* a male, then thy eſtimation ſhall be fifteen ſhekels, and for the female ten ſhekels.

8 But if he be poorer than thy eſtimation, then he ſhall preſent himſelf before the prieſt, and the prieſt ſhall value him: according to his ability that vowed ſhall the prieſt value him.

9 And if *it be* a beaſt, whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD, all that *any man* giveth of ſuch unto the LORD ſhall be holy.

10 He ſhall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he ſhall at all change beaſt for beaſt; then it and the exchange thereof ſhall be holy.

11 And if *it be* any unclean beaſt, of which they do not offer a ſacrifice unto the LORD; then he ſhall preſent the beaſt before the prieſt:

12 And the prieſt ſhall value it, whether it be good or bad; as thou valueſt it, *who art* the prieſt, ſo ſhall it be.

13 But if he will at all redeem it, then he ſhall add a fifth *part* thereof unto thy eſtimation.

14 And when a man ſhall ſanctify his houſe *to be* holy unto the LORD; then the prieſt ſhall eſtimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the prieſt ſhall eſtimate it, ſo ſhall it ſtand.

15 And if he that ſanctified it will redeem his houſe, then he ſhall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy eſtimation unto it, and it ſhall be his.

16 And if a man ſhall ſanctify unto the LORD *ſome part* of a field of his poſſeſſion: then thy eſtimation ſhall be according to the ſeed thereof: an homer of barley ſeed *ſhall be valued* at fifty ſhekels of ſilver.

17 If he ſanctify his field from the year of jubilee, according to thy eſtimation it ſhall ſtand.

18 But if he ſanctify his field after the jubilee, then the prieſt ſhall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubilee, and it ſhall be abated from thy eſtimation.

19 And if he that ſanctified the field will in any wiſe redeem it, then he ſhall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy eſtimation unto it, and it ſhall be aſſured to him.

20 And if he will not redeem the field, or if

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the ſanctuary from his childhood, long before the age when the Levites entered upon their office. Perhaps ſome of theſe perſons, who, from ſingular affection to the tabernacle and the worſhip of God, thus dedicated themſelves or their children, were thus employed: yet in general they were allowed, or even ordered, to be redeemed, at the valuation here preſcribed; which was equitable and moderate, and was reduced ſtill lower in caſe of poverty.

V. 9—13.] If any particular animal was thus vowed unto the Lord, or dedicated to him, it was to be accounted holy, and muſt not be exchanged, but muſt be ſacrificed, provided it were fit for ſacrifice: otherwiſe it was to be valued and ſold; but at a dearer rate to him who vowed it, than to another perſon, as a rebuke for his raſhneſs and inconſtancy. Some ſuppoſe that the money was put into the treaſury of the ſanctuary to defray the expences of the worſhip there performed: others that the prieſts had it for their own uſe.—The difference between this *ſingular vow* and *ordinary vows*, ſeems to have been this: the ordinary vow was made, when in queſt of ſome bleſſing, or when ſome ſpecial mercy was received, the perſon who vowed, engaged to offer certain ſacrifices of burnt-offerings or peace-offerings unto the Lord; and it included nothing elſe. But a ſingular vow was the ſolemn dedication of a man's perſon or child, or ſome part of his property, to the immediate uſe of the ſanctuary, or of the prieſts; *with ſpecial deſignation*, whether fit for ſacrifice or not.

V. 16. *Some part of a field*, &c.] A man was not allowed to alienate his whole patrimony, but only ſome part of a field in this manner: he might expreſs his goodwill for the houſe of God, but he muſt not impoveriſh his own family.

An homer, &c.] That is, as much land as required an homer of barley to ſow it. An *omer* was only the tenth part of an ephah; an *homer* contained ten ephahs, or about eight buſhels Wincheſter meaſure.

V. 20—24.] If the perſon who dedicated his land refuſed to redeem it, it became the perpetual inheritance of the

if he have ſold the field to another man, it ſhall not be redeemed any more.

21 But the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, ſhall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted: the poſſeſſion thereof ſhall be the prieſts'.

22 And if *a man* ſanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which *is* not of the fields of his poſſeſſion;

23 Then the prieſt ſhall reckon unto him the worth of thy eſtimation, *even* unto the year of the jubilee, and he ſhall give thine eſtimation in that day, *as* a holy thing unto the LORD.

24 In the year of the jubilee the field ſhall return unto him of whom it was bought, *even* to him to whom the poſſeſſion of the land *did belong*.

25 And all thy eſtimations ſhall be according to the ſhekel of the ſanctuary: twenty gerahs ſhall be the ſhekel.

26 Only the firſtling of the beaſts, which ſhould be the LORD's firſtling, no man ſhall ſanctify it: whether *it be* ox or ſheep, it *is* the LORD's.

27 And if *it be* of an unclean beaſt, then he ſhall redeem *it* according to thine eſtimation, and ſhall add a fifth *part* of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it ſhall be ſold according to thy eſtimation.

28 Notwithſtanding, no devoted thing that a man ſhall devote unto the LORD, of all that he hath, *both* of man and beaſt, and of the field of his poſſeſſion, ſhall be ſold or redeemed: every devoted thing *is* moſt holy unto the LORD.

29 None devoted, which ſhall be devoted of men, ſhall be redeemed; *but* ſhall ſurely *be* put to death.

30 And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the ſeed of the land, *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

31 And

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the prieſts; and could only be *leaſed* out till the year of jubilee: conſequently a man could not thus alienate ſuch land, as was by other regulations appointed to return, at the year of jubilee, to the family of which it had been bought.

V. 26, 27.] As this firſtling was the Lord's before, it would have been a ſolemn mockery to pretend to make it a matter of a ſingular vow; for it was already appointed to be ſacrificed (*Exod.* xiii. 15). But if an unclean firſtling were thus dedicated to God, the owner might redeem it, as another unclean firſtling, (*Exod.* xiii. 13.) though not with a lamb, but with it's eſtimation in money, adding to it a fifth part: and if he refuſed to redeem it, it was not killed, but ſold for the benefit of the prieſts, or the ſupport of the ſanctuary.

V. 28. *Devoted*, &c.] This was another kind of vow, by which perſons or things were *ſolemnly devoted under a curſe to utter deſtruction*, in ſome way ſuppoſed to be for the honour of God. Thus the Lord himſelf devoted the Canaanites and Amalekites in general, and Jericho in particular. Thus the Iſraelites devoted the cities of Arad to utter deſtruction (*Numb.* xxi. 1—3). Probably Jephtha's vow, and his performance of it, aroſe from a miſconſtruction of this law; for whatever was thus devoted was ſurely to be put to death: yet the people reſcued Jonathan, whom his father Saul had thus raſhly and unwittingly devoted (1 *Sam.* xiv. 24—28. 38—45).

V. 30—34.] Theſe laws would prevent the introduction of a *modus* in collecting the tithes, as well as impropriations; and many other methods, which have reduced almoſt to beggary the clergy in many places, for whoſe maintenance they were originally given. Whatever may be ſaid for theſe things, where tithes are only an human conſtitution; it would certainly have been wrong, where they were a divine appointment: and this law evidently teaches, that they, "who *labour* in the word and doctrine," have a right to a maintenance, and ought not to be defrauded of it (*Numb.* xviii. 20—32).

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is good to be zealouſly affected, and liberally diſpoſed to the ſervice and ſanctuary of the Lord: but conſideration ſhould precede, and prudence ſhould direct, the application: or raſh vows, and inconſtancy in performing them, will diſhonour God and embarraſs our own minds.—We ſhould dedicate ourſelves and our families to the ſervice of God, according to the ſituation of life in which the providence of God has placed us: but may we not aptly accommodate theſe "ſingular vows of perſons," to the caſe of thoſe, who, perhaps with *good intention* but *great impropriety*, are determined to leave their proper employments, and to enter into the miniſtry; or thoſe, who reſolve to bring up their children to that ſacred office, before they can know whether they will be properly qualified or diſpoſed for ſuch a ſervice? Too many ſeem to forget, that there are other ways of glorifying God, and ſerving his church, beſides preaching the goſpel: and though no general rules can be preſcribed in ſuch caſes; yet much caution, deliberation, prayer, patient waiting upon God, and ſubmiſſion to his providence, ſhould precede every perſon's leaving another calling, to enter into the miniſtry. Nor ſhould any reſolutions, or vows, be conſidered binding unleſs the Lord allow them, by giving proper qualifications and diſpoſitions, and opening a regular door of admiſſion in his

31 And if a man will at all redeem *ought* of his tithes, he ſhall add thereto the fifth *part* thereof.

32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatſoever paſſeth under the rod, the tenth ſhall be holy unto the LORD.

33 He ſhall not ſearch whether it be good or bad, neither ſhall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof ſhall be holy: it ſhall not be redeemed.

34 Theſe *are* the commandments which the LORD commanded Moſes for the children of Iſrael in mount Sinai.

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providence. Otherwiſe ſuch perſons had better endeavour themſelves, and bring up their children, to honour God by their example, influence, and ſubſtance in a private character: for the Lord to this day will chooſe his own miniſters whom he will employ in his ſanctuary, without regarding our deſires and intentions.—Our houſes, lands, cattle, and ſubſtance, muſt be poſſeſſed, and uſed to the glory of God; and a portion dedicated immediately to the ſupport of his worſhip, and to promote his cauſe, is acceptable to him, if done with a conſtant and willing mind, and in prudence and equity.—But the Lord neither approves of thoſe, who grudge his ſervants their ſupport; nor of thoſe, who injure their families, and perhaps their creditors, by an imprudent or oſtentatious profuſion in theſe reſpects; nor of thoſe who raſhly engage, and inconſtantly retract their engagements.—But let us not forget that we ſinners were devoted to utter deſtruction, as under the curſe of a broken law: and that Jeſus willingly devoted himſelf to be made a curſe for us, and taſted the bitterneſs of death, yea the wrath of the Father, for our redemption. The doom of thoſe who neglect this great ſalvation will be irreverſible; and they will be bid to "depart from "him accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil "and his angels." Let us then flee to him for refuge; and receiving the atonement, let us yield ourſelves to him, without wiſhing or deſiring a change, to be unto him a holy people, that "his name may be glorified in us," living, and dying, and for ever, "and we in him, accord-"ing to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt." (2 *Theſ.* i. 11, 12).

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES

CALLED

NUMBERS.

This is called THE BOOK OF NUMBERS *from the ſeveral numberings of the people, and of the Levites which it records. It derives this name, (as the preceding books do theirs) from the Greek Tranſlation called the Septuagint; but the names of the other books ſtand in the original Greek, while the name of this book is tranſlated into Engliſh. It begins with an account of the arrangement of the twelve tribes into the regular encampments, in four diviſions under their ſeveral leaders, around the tabernacle; the care of which and of all it's furniture was committed to the Levites, in three diviſions, according to their families. The hiſtory of Iſrael afterwards proceeds: and the ſacred penman having recorded that inſtance of rebellion, which provoked God "to ſwear in his wrath that they "ſhould not enter into his reſt;" gives an account of the continuance of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs for almoſt thirty-nine years of that period: and the whole is intermixed with many laws, moral and ceremonial. It would not conſiſt with brevity to deſcend to particulars, which will appear at the head of each chapter: ſuffice it to obſerve, that the whole is calculated to illuſtrate the ſcriptural doctrine of the juſtice, holineſs, truth, goodneſs, and mercy of God; and of the rebellion, unbelief, ingratitude, and perverſeneſs of man. The divine diſpenſations towards Iſrael, here recorded, had a tendency to humble and prove them; to diſtinguiſh betwixt*

betwixt the true believer and the hypocrite; to lead them all into an acquaintance with the Lord, and themſelves; to wean them from ſelf-confidence, and to induce them to truſt in God; to render them watchful, and to fill them with reverential fear of him; and ſo to train them up for the conqueſt of Canaan, and for adhering to their God and religion, when put in poſſeſſion of that promiſed land. Theſe and other ſimilar leſſons they might learn from their own rebellions, and ſubmiſſions, and from all the Lord's judgments and mercies towards them: and if we duly attend we may receive profitable inſtructions of the ſame kind, for our warning, encouragement, and eſtabliſhment in the faith.

Before Chriſt 1490. *Before Chriſt* 1490.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. God's command to number Iſrael, 1—16. *2d. The performance of it; with the number of each tribe, and the ſum total,* 17—46. *3d. The Levites not numbered with the reſt, being to ſerve at the tabernacle,* 47—54.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, in the wilderneſs of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the firſt *day* of the ſecond month, in the ſecond year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, ſaying,

2 Take ye the ſum of all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, with the number of *their* names, every male by their poll;

3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Iſrael: thou and Aaron ſhall number them by their armies.

4 And with you there ſhall be a man of every tribe, every one head of the houſe of his fathers.

5 And theſe *are* the names of the men that ſhall ſtand with you: Of *the tribe of* Reuben; Elizur, the ſon of Shedeur.

6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel, the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

7 Of Judah; Nahſhon, the ſon of Amminadab.

8 Of Iſſachar; Nathaneel, the ſon of Zuar.

9 Of Zebulun; Eliab, the ſon of Helon.

10 Of the children of Joſeph: of Ephraim; Eliſhama, the ſon of Ammihud: of Manaſſeh; Gamaliel, the ſon of Pedahzur.

11 Of Benjamin; Abidan, the ſon of Gideoni.

12 Of Dan; Ahiezer, the ſon of Ammiſhaddai.

13 Of Aſher; Pagiel, the ſon of Ocran.

14 Of Gad; Eliaſaph, the ſon of Deuel.

15 Of Naphtali; Ahira, the ſon of Enan.

16 Theſe *were* the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thouſands in Iſrael.

17 And Moſes and Aaron took theſe men which are expreſſed by *their* names:

18 And they aſſembled all the congregation together on the firſt *day* of the ſecond month; and

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NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 2, 3.] Though the ſum total in this chapter be exactly the ſame with that which is mentioned before, (*Ex.* xxxviii. 25—28); the numbering cannot be the ſame: for *that* preceded the conſtruction of the tabernacle, which was ſet up on the firſt day of the firſt month, and the baſes were formed of the ſilver collected upon that occaſion; whereas *this* was ordered on the firſt day of the ſecond month. The Levites were exempted both from the tribute, and from the war, and conſequently were not included in either account. None ſeem to have been numbered, who were unſerviceable, whether through age, or infirmities; but, as "there was not one feeble perſon among their tribes," when they left Egypt, we may ſuppoſe there were very few at this time. Each tribe reckoned in even numbers, no leſs ſum than fifty being mentioned, and that but in one inſtance. Probably they either had been before, or were now, ranked under rulers of thouſands, of hundreds, and of fifties; and were regiſtered accordingly with the omiſſion of the odd numbers: and the alterations had been ſo few ſince the former account was taken, that it made no difference in the round ſum of thouſands and hundreds.—They were numbered in order to illuſtrate the divine faithfulneſs in thus increaſing the ſeed of Jacob; to prepare the way for their regular encampment and government, and for their being trained up for the wars and conqueſt of Canaan; and to aſcertain their genealogies, in order to the diviſion of the land by lot.

and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their poll.

19 As the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo he numbered them in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

20 And the children of Reuben, Iſrael's eldeſt ſon, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the numbers of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war:

21 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Reuben, *were* forty and ſix thouſand and five hundred.

22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, thoſe that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war:

23 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Simeon, *were* fifty and nine thouſand and three hundred.

24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

25 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Gad, *were* forty and five thouſand ſix hundred and fifty.

26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

27 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Judah, *were* threeſcore and fourteen thouſand and ſix hundred.

28 Of the children of Iſſachar, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

29 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Iſſachar, *were* fifty and four thouſand and four hundred.

30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

31 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Zebulun, *were* fifty and ſeven thouſand and four hundred.

32 Of the children of Joſeph, *namely*, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

33 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Ephraim, *were* forty thouſand and five hundred.

34 Of the children of Manaſſeh, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

35 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Manaſſeh, *were* thirty and two thouſand and two hundred.

36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

37 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Benjamin, *were* thirty and five thouſand and four hundred.

38 Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their

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V. 26, 27.] Jacob had given Judah the pre-eminence in his prophetical bleſſing; and that tribe was now intended to have the precedency in the encampments of Iſrael: with reference to each of theſe events, God had increaſed them more than any of their brethren; and to more than double the number of ſome of the tribes.—Ephraim and Manaſſeh, according to the ſame prophecy, were numbered as diſtinct tribes, and Ephraim had the ſuperiority, as it was foretold; and Joſeph indeed appears "a fruitful bough:" yet the tribe of Judah was more numerous, by one thouſand nine hundred men, than theſe two tribes united. (32—35).

their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

39 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Dan, *were* threeſcore and two thouſand and ſeven hundred.

40 Of the children of Aſher, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

41 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Aſher, *were* forty and one thouſand and five hundred.

42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

43 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Naphtali, *were* fifty and three thouſand and four hundred.

44 Theſe *are* thoſe that were numbered, which Moſes and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Iſrael, *being* twelve men: each one was for the houſe of his fathers.

45 So were all thoſe that were numbered of the children of Iſrael, by the houſe of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Iſrael;

46 Even all they that were numbered were ſix hundred thouſand and three thouſand and five hundred and fifty.

47 But the Levites, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them.

48 For the LORD had ſpoken unto Moſes, ſaying,

49 Only thou ſhalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the ſum of them among the children of Iſrael;

50 But thou ſhalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of teſtimony, and over all the veſſels thereof, and over all things that *belong* to it: they ſhall bear the tabernacle, and all the veſſels thereof, and they ſhall miniſter unto it, and ſhall encamp round about the tabernacle.

51 And when the tabernacle ſetteth forward, the Levites ſhall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites ſhall ſet it up: and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

52 And the children of Iſrael ſhall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own ſtandard, throughout their hoſts.

53 But the Levites ſhall pitch round about the tabernacle of teſtimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Iſrael: and the Levites ſhall keep the charge of the tabernacle of teſtimony.

54 And the children of Iſrael did according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo did they.

CHAP.

V. 53. *No wrath*, &c.] There would have been wrath upon the congregation, if the ſervice of the ſanctuary had been neglected; or if the people had indiſcriminately entered into the tabernacle, or attempted to remove it when they marched.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we obſerve the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes, however large, and however improbable the performance might appear; we may take courage in expecting and praying for the accompliſhment of thoſe which yet remain to be fulfilled, to ourſelves, and to the church of God. Whilſt we reflect with aſtoniſhment on the manner in which this immenſe multitude of men, beſides women, children, and ſtrangers, were fed, watered, and provided for in the wilderneſs; we may learn to truſt the Lord for ſuch things as are needful for us and our families: and when we recollect how ſoon, and in what manner their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs; we may be reminded to revere the aweful juſtice of God; to prepare for death, which is continually making ſuch ravages; and to repent, and depart from ſin which produces ſuch fatal effects.—We here alſo ſee, as in a glaſs, the true Iſrael of God; a number, which no man can number, yet all known by name, and written in the book of life by the Captain of our ſalvation. They are his willing ſubjects, and do not "deſpiſe dominion," whether of magiſtrates or miniſters, as acting by commiſſion from him; they are likewiſe men of peace, yet marſhalled, armed, and prepared for battle: and they are daily aſſaulted, whilſt on earth, by many enemies; but under the command and protection of their Captain, they ſhall all finally, one after another, be crowned conquerors.—Nor are miniſters diſcharged from this war; but muſt be careful "not to entangle themſelves with the "affairs of this life, that they may pleaſe him, who hath "choſen them to be ſoldiers," yea, officers in his army;

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. The divine commandment concerning the encampments of the Iſraelites on every ſide of the tabernacle, and their marching before and behind it in four ſquadrons, each under it's appointed captain, 1—33. *2d. Their ready obedience,* 34.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

2 Every man of the children of Iſrael ſhall pitch by his own ſtandard, with the enſign of their father's houſe: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation ſhall they pitch.

3 And on the eaſt ſide, toward the riſing of the ſun, ſhall they of the ſtandard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies: and Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab *ſhall be* captain of the children of Judah.

4 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* threeſcore and fourteen thouſand and ſix hundred.

5 And thoſe that do pitch next unto him *ſhall be* the tribe of Iſſachar: and Nethaneël the ſon of Zuar *ſhall be* captain of the children of Iſſachar.

6 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and four thouſand and four hundred.

7 *Then* the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the ſon of Helon *ſhall be* captain of the children of Zebulun.

8 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and ſeven thouſand and four hundred.

9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah *were* an hundred thouſand and fourſcore thouſand and ſix thouſand and four hundred, throughout their armies: theſe ſhall firſt ſet forth.

10 On the ſouth ſide *ſhall be* the ſtandard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben *ſhall be* Elizur, the ſon of Shedeur.

11 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered

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and they muſt learn "to endure hardſhip as good ſoldiers." If they are exempted from ſecular concerns, it is in order that they may be the more given up to the ſtudy and preaching of the word of God and prayer, which are the chief weapons of their warfare; by means of which they may endeavour to avert the wrath of God from the people. As Chriſtians are ſeparated from the world; ſo miniſters ſhould be ſtill more detached from it's purſuits and employments, and "examples to the flock;" 'not,' ſays Mr. Henry, 'affecting to ſeem *greater*, but aiming to be really *better*, 'every way *better*, than others.'

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 2. *Far off*, &c.] The Iſraelites encamped in four grand diviſions with the tabernacle in the centre; yet at ſome diſtance, as a token of awe and reverence. The ſanctuary and the ark, as pledges of Jehovah's ſpecial favour, were in reality their glory and defence; and yet they were poſted as if they had been the guardians of them, and no enemy could approach them without forcing the way through their hoſts. Though religion be indeed *our* protection, yet it is our duty to ſupport *it's* cauſe and intereſt with our whole power and ability.—This encampment is computed to have framed a moveable city of twelve miles ſquare: and many think that the door of every tent faced the tabernacle, that thence the people might worſhip towards this token of God's preſence upon a mercy ſeat.

V. 3. *Judah*, &c.] The tribe of Judah, from which Chriſt ſprang, was appointed to the higheſt ſtation, and under it were ranked the tribes of Iſſachar and Zebulun, Judah's younger brethren by the ſame mother.—The tribe of Reuben, Jacob's eldeſt ſon, though degraded, was appointed to lead the ſecond ſquadron, under whom ranked the tribe of Simeon his younger brother, and that of Gad, the eldeſt ſon of Zilpah, whom Leah gave to Jacob to wife.—The three tribes deſcended from Rachel formed the third ſquadron: and the three other tribes deſcended from the concubines formed the fourth, under the command of a captain of the tribe of Dan; concerning whom Jacob propheſied; "Dan ſhall judge his people, as one of the "tribes of Iſrael."—Thus the whole arrangement was formed in evident wiſdom, as well as uncontroulable ſovereignty, ſo as to conduce to peace and perpetuate relative affection.

V. 5. *Nethaneel.*] The remembrance of the God of their fathers, which many of the Iſraelites retained during their bondage in Egypt, appears from the names which they gave their children: As *Nethaneel*, which ſignifies, *the gift of God: Eliab, my God a father: Elizur, my God a rock: Shelumiel, God my peace: Eliaſaph, my God hath added: Eliſhamah, my God hath heard*, &c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord by his over-ruling providence doth as certainly, though with leſs obſervation, appoint the bounds of our habitation, and our rank in life, as he did the encampments of Iſrael in the wilderneſs. It is therefore our duty and intereſt to be contented with our place, and to endeavour to occupy it in a proper manner; without attempting to deſert it, or wiſhing to change it; without envying, murmuring, ambition, or covetouſneſs.—And if he, "who "ordereth all things after the counſel of his own will," hath allotted our ſtation near to his word and ordinances; and hath given us precious faith in the divine Redeemer, we

bered thereof, *were* forty and ſix thouſand and five hundred.

12 And thoſe which pitch by him *ſhall be* the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon *ſhall be* Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

13 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and nine thouſand and three hundred.

14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the ſons of Gad *ſhall be* Eliaſaph the ſon of Reuel.

15 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* forty and five thouſand and ſix hundred and fifty.

16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben *were* an hundred thouſand and fifty and one thouſand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies: and they ſhall ſet forth in the ſecond rank.

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation ſhall ſet forward, with the camp of the Levites in the midſt of the camp: as they encamp ſo ſhall they ſet forward, every man in his place, by their ſtandards.

18 On the weſt ſide *ſhall be* the ſtandard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies: and the captain of the ſons of Ephraim *ſhall be* Eliſhama the ſon of Ammihud.

19 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* forty thouſand and five hundred.

20 And by him *ſhall be* the tribe of Manaſſeh: and the captain of the children of Manaſſeh *ſholl be* Gamaliel the ſon of Pedahzur.

21 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and two thouſand and two hundred.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the ſons of Benjamin *ſhall be* Abidan the ſon of Gideoni.

23 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and five thouſand and four hundred.

24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim *were* an hundred thouſand and eight thouſand and an hundred, throughout their armies: and they ſhall go forward in the third rank.

25 The ſtandard of the camp of Dan *ſhall be* on the north ſide by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan *ſhall be* Ahiezer the ſon of Ammiſhaddai.

26 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* threeſcore and two thouſand and ſeven hundred.

27 And thoſe that encamp by him *ſhall be* the tribe of Aſher: and the captain of the children of Aſher *ſhall be* Pagiel the ſon of Ocran.

28 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* forty and one thouſand and five hundred.

29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali *ſhall be* Ahira, the ſon of Enan.

30 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and three thouſand and four hundred.

31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan *were* an hundred thouſand and fifty and ſeven thouſand and ſix hundred:

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we have abundant reaſon to be thankful for ſuch diſtinguiſhing grace; and though in a wilderneſs, in a cottage; in poverty, we have no reaſon, and ſurely we ſhall have no diſpoſition, to envy thoſe who poſſeſs ſtately manſions, elegant gardens, or cultivated eſtates, but have no lot in Iſrael, no inheritance in Canaan.—Our God is a God of order, and a God of peace: and commands that all things in his church ſhould be done "decently and in order;" and "that all things be done in peace."—It would be well if in attempting to accompliſh the former purpoſe, according to their own idea of decency and order, all denominations of Chriſtians had not too much loſt ſight of the latter injunction. It is deſirable that all true Chriſtians ſhould be of one judgment: but if that cannot be obtained, it is of great importance that they be of *one heart*: and that, like theſe four ſquadrons of Iſrael, they live at peace with one another; and in their different encampments ſurround the ark, as all of one family, embarked in one common intereſt, and marching to the ſame heavenly Canaan: and that they be upon their guard againſt the ſuggeſtions of thoſe enemies, who would perſuade them to quarrel about their different enſigns, and to draw the ſword of war againſt their brethren; inſtead of being valiant for the truth, and againſt the common enemies of their religion.—Then would the church be comely, and alſo "terrible as an army with "banners;" and not the leſs ſo for being divided into different ſquadrons, encamped or marching ſeparately; provided each diviſion vied with all the others, which ſhould be moſt zealous

hundred: they ſhall go hindmoſt with their ſtandards.

32 Theſe *are* thoſe which were numbered of the children of Iſrael, by the houſe of their fathers: all thoſe that were numbered of the camps, throughout their hoſts, *were* ſix hundred thouſand and three thouſand and five hundred and fifty.

33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Iſrael; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

34 And the children of Iſrael did according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes: ſo they pitched by their ſtandards, and ſo they ſet forward, every one after their families, according to the houſe of their fathers.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1ſt. Some particulars concerning Aaron and his ſons, 1—4. 2d. The tribe of Levi given them for aſſiſtants, inſtead of the firſt-born, 5—13. 3d. The Levites numbered, and their ſeveral poſts and charges aſſigned them by the command of God, 14—39. 4th. The actual exchange of the Levites, and the redemption of the ſupernumerary firſt-born, 40—51.

THESE alſo *are* the generations of Aaron and Moſes, in the day *that* the LORD ſpake with Moſes in mount Sinai.

2 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Aaron; Nadab the firſt-born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

3 Theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Aaron, the prieſts which were anointed, whom he conſecrated to miniſter in the prieſts' office.

4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered ſtrange fire before the LORD in the wilderneſs of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar miniſtered in the prieſts' office in the ſight of Aaron their father.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and preſent them before Aaron the prieſt, that they may miniſter unto him.

7 And they ſhall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the ſervice of the tabernacle.

8 And they ſhall keep all the inſtruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Iſrael, to do the ſervice of the tabernacle.

9 And thou ſhalt give the Levites unto Aaron, and to his ſons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Iſrael.

10 And thou ſhalt appoint Aaron and his ſons, and they ſhall wait on their prieſts' office: and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

11 And

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zealous for the ark, and for the cauſe of God and truth; and moſt careful to "adorn the doctrine of God our Sa-"viour in all things."—Let then brotherly love continue: and may the Lord proſper the attempts, and increaſe the numbers, of thoſe who "endeavour to keep the unity of the "Spirit in the bond of peace!"

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. *The generations*, &c.] Moſes's ſons are not at all mentioned, being numbered among the ordinary Levites, by a ſingular inſtance of diſintereſted moderation, and ſubmiſſion to the appointment of God; who, in proof of the divine legation of his ſervant, willed him to act in a manner ſo contrary to all other eminent men: for they almoſt univerſally ſeek the advancement of their poſterity. Aaron is here firſt mentioned, becauſe the honour of the prieſthood was conferred upon him.

V. 4. *In the ſight*, &c.] That is, according to Aaron's direction; that, by attending to his prudent counſel, they might be preſerved from the ſin and puniſhment of their brethren. Their regular and reverential miniſtrations would afford much conſolation to Aaron after his affliction.

V. 5—10.] There was now much work to be done, and only three prieſts to perform the whole: ſome aſſiſtants were therefore neceſſary to attend on the more ordinary ſervices, whilſt *they* ſprinkled the blood, burnt the fat, offered incenſe, &c; eſpecially when the tabernacle was to be taken down, and carried with them in their march. That no improper perſons, none who were not called of God, might be employed, the tribe of Levi was on this occaſion ſet apart for theſe ſervices. To this tribe Moſes and Aaron belonged: it had been ſignalized by it's zeal againſt idolatry in the matter of the golden calf, and was by far the ſmalleſt tribe of all: and in ſhort it ſeemed good in the ſight of God to chooſe the Levites to approach to him, in preference to the other Iſraelites. Several intimations had before been given of this purpoſe of God: and the Levites ſeem not to have been included among thoſe who paid the half ſhekel, any more than among thoſe who were numbered for ſoldiers: but at this time it was more fully and expreſsly declared.

V. 39.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Iſrael, inſtead of all the firſt-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Iſrael; therefore the Levites ſhall be mine,
13 Becauſe all the firſt-born *are* mine; *for*, on the day that I ſmote all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firſt-born in Iſrael, both man and beaſt; mine they ſhall be: I *am* the LORD.
14 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes in the wilderneſs of Sinai, ſaying,
15 Number the children of Levi, after the houſe of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward ſhalt thou number them.
16 And Moſes numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.
17 And theſe were the ſons of Levi, by their names; Gerſhon, and Kohath, and Merari.
18 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Gerſhon, by their families; Libni, and Shimei.
19 And the ſons of Kohath, by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
20 And the ſons of Merari, by their families; Mahli, and Muſhi: theſe *are* the families of the Levites, according to the houſe of their fathers.
21 Of Gerſhon *was* the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: theſe *are* the families of the Gerſhonites.
22 Thoſe that were numbered of them according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward, *even* thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* ſeven thouſand and five hundred.
23 The families of the Gerſhonites ſhall pitch behind the tabernacle weſtward.
24 And the chief of the houſe of the father of the Gerſhonites *ſhall be* Eliaſaph the ſon of Lael.
25 And the charge of the ſons of Gerſhon, in the tabernacle of the congregation, *ſhall be* the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it, for all the ſervice thereof.
27 And of Kohath *was* the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites: and the family of the Uzzielites: theſe *are* the families of the Kohathites.
28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* eight thouſand and ſix hundred, keeping the charge of the ſanctuary.
29 The families of the ſons of Kohath ſhall pitch on the ſide of the tabernacle ſouthward.
30 And the chief of the houſe of the father of the families of the Kohathites *ſhall be* Elizaphan the ſon of Uzziel.
31 And their charge *ſhall be* the ark, and the table, and the candleſtick, and the altars, and the veſſels of the ſanctuary wherewith they miniſter, and the hanging, and all the ſervice thereof.
32 And Eleazar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt *ſhall be* chief over the chief of the Levites, *and have* the overſight of them that keep the charge of the ſanctuary.
33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Muſhites: theſe *are* the families of Merari.
34 And thoſe that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* ſix thouſand and two hundred.
35 And the chief of the houſe of the father of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel, the ſon of Abihail: *theſe* ſhall pitch on the ſide of the tabernacle northward.
36 And *under* the cuſtody and charge of the ſons of Merari *ſhall be* the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the ſockets thereof, and all the veſſels thereof, and all that ſerveth thereto.
37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their ſockets, and their pins, and their cords.
38 But thoſe that encamp before the tabernacle toward the eaſt, *even* before the tabernacle of the congregation eaſtward, *ſhall be*

Moſes, and Aaron, and his ſons, keeping the charge of the ſanctuary for the charge of the children of Iſrael: and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moſes and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* twenty and two thouſand.

40 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Number all the firſt-born of the males of the children of Iſrael, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.

41 And thou ſhalt take the Levites for me, (I *am* the LORD) inſtead of all the firſt-born among the children of Iſrael; and the cattle of the Levites, inſtead of all the firſtlings among the cattle of the children of Iſrael.

42 And

Ver. 39. *All*, &c.] The ſum total of the Levites was 22,300: but the 300 are ſuppoſed to be the firſt-born, who were already devoted to the Lord: and we muſt acknowledge a peculiar interpoſition of Providence in this near coincidence in the numbers of the Levites, and of the firſt-born.

V. 41—43.] The firſt-born in any company of people muſt in general amount to the proportion of one in eight, or ten at leaſt; whereas the number here mentioned, probably was not one in fifty of all the males young and old: for there were above 600,000 adults, and perhaps as many under age. Some ſuppoſe that none were numbered, but ſuch as were unmarried, and ſo not become heads of families themſelves; and that the firſt-born Egyptians alſo, who were deſtroyed, were thus accounted: but even theſe muſt have formed a much larger portion. I therefore accede to the ſentiment of ſuch as think that none were numbered, but thoſe who had been born after the deſtruction of the firſt-born of Egypt. This indeed ſeems the meaning of the law, (*Ex.* xiii. 2,) which referred to *the future* and not *to the paſt*; and it is evident that the firſtlings of the cattle were thus reckoned. Indeed 45,000 of both ſexes, which is rather more than double the firſt-born males, ſeems a vaſt number of firſt-born children within the ſpace of one year: but upon reflection we ſhall find it no ways improbable that amongſt 1,200,000 perſons of both ſexes, who were above twenty years of age, (and many might marry much younger than that age,) there ſhould be within that time near 50,000 marriages; that is about the twelfth part of the company of marriageable perſons. Eſpecially when we conſider that multitudes might be inclined to marry, when they found they were about to enjoy liberty: and when they recollected that the promiſes made to Iſrael peculiarly reſpected a very rapid increaſe of their numbers; and that there would be a very great bleſſing upon them in this reſpect in conſequence of it. If we admit of this ſolution, the firſt-born Iſraelites were all unfit for ſervice on this emergency: and as they were the heirs of their ſeveral families, when they were grown up, they probably would not have been very willing to be ſervants to the prieſts; conſequently the change would be as acceptable to the relations of thoſe who were ſet aſide, as to thoſe who were ſubſtituted in their ſtead, (xviii. 2). Yet it ſeems, that, though the Levites and their poſterity were thus dedicated to God, it was only in lieu of the firſt-born at that time amongſt them; and that the law concerning the preſentation and redemption of the firſt-born was in force through all ſucceeding generations, until the days of Chriſt, (*Luke* ii. 23).

V. 44—51.] Either it was determined by lot, who ſhould pay the redemption-money, and for whom the Levites ſhould be accepted; or it was paid by a common tax: or, as ſome think, they began with the eldeſt, and ſo the youngeſt not being changed paid the money.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we conſider Jeſus, our great High Prieſt, appointed of the Father, and intruſted with the charge of the ſanctuary and of the whole congregation, and keeping that charge with unremitting attention, entire faithfulneſs, love, and power; we ſhould recollect, that his miniſters, as preſented unto him and miniſtering before him, have under him a ſolemn charge committed to them alſo: they are called upon to wait in their office; to ſerve the Lord with reverence, to offer no ſtrange fire, doing nothing of their own head, or in their own ſpirit; and with all diligence and fidelity to follow the inſtructions and copy the example of their Lord. But it is of the utmoſt importance that each ſhould know his own poſt and duty; that no part of the work may be neglected; and that there may be no interference, and no occaſion for envy, ambition, or diſcontent. No ſervice required by ſuch a maſter can be either mean or hard: for he will put honour upon the faithful in the loweſt ſituation, and will provide aſſiſtance where the work is too laborious. They alſo, who are not engaged in the miniſtry, have a work to do, and a charge to keep; and muſt remember that all men are the Lord's by creation, and all true Chriſtians are his by redemption; and that as the miniſtry was appointed for their benefit, they are required to ſtrengthen the hands, and to encourage the hearts, of thoſe who miniſter before the Lord in their behalf. Bleſſed be God we may all at preſent come even into the holieſt without danger of death, nay with aſſurance of acceptance and life eternal, if we come by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Still however we muſt regret that the Lord's people form ſo ſmall a proportion of the whole multitude of mankind, and ſhould be reminded to pray for the ſending forth of more faithful miniſters; for when they are increaſed, it is a hopeful ſign that the Lord has much work to do in increaſing his church. Nor let us forget, that the children, though unfit for ſervice, were numbered as part of this holy tribe; "for of ſuch is the "kingdom of God:" but whilſt we deſire that our offſpring ſhould be numbered among the Lord's peculiar people, and excel in holineſs; let us, after the example of Moſes, be indifferent about every other diſtinction, either for them or for ourſelves.

NOTES.

42 And Moſes numbered, as the LORD commanded him, all the firſt-born among the children of Iſrael.

43 And all the firſt-born males, by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of thoſe that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thouſand two hundred and threeſcore and thirteen.

44 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

45 Take the Levites inſtead of all the firſt-born among the children of Iſrael, and the cattle of the Levites inſtead of their cattle, and the Levites ſhall be mine: I *am* the LORD.

46 And for thoſe that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threeſcore and thirteen of the firſt-born of the children of Iſrael, which are more than the Levites;

47 Thou ſhalt even take five ſhekels apiece by the poll; after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary ſhalt thou take *them:* (the ſhekel *is* twenty gerahs:)

48 And thou ſhalt give the money wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed unto Aaron and to his ſons.

49 And Moſes took the redemption-money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites.

50 Of the firſt-born of the children of Iſrael took he the money; a thouſand three hundred and threeſcore and five *ſhekels*, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary.

51 And Moſes gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his ſons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. God's command to number thoſe Levites who were fit for ſervice, and to aſſign them their ſeveral offices in the removal of the tabernacle, with ſpecial directions, 1—33. *2d. The performance of this command,* 34—49.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

2 Take the ſum of the ſons of Kohath from among the ſons of Levi, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers;

3 From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter into the hoſt to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 This *ſhall be* the ſervice of the ſons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation *about* the moſt holy things.

5 And when the camp ſetteth forward, Aaron ſhall come, and his ſons, and they ſhall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of teſtimony with it;

6 And ſhall put thereon the covering of badgers' ſkins, and ſhall ſpread over *it* a cloth wholly of blue, and ſhall put in the ſtaves thereof.

7 And

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. Ver. 3. *From thirty years*, &c.] The people were numbered for war from twenty years of age; but the Levites were not numbered for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, till they were thirty. This however had ſpecial reference to the charge and burden of removing the tabernacle: for they entered as probationers at twenty-five, (viii. 24—26); and in David's time, when the work was more extenſive but not ſo heavy, they were admitted at twenty years old, (1 *Chron.* xxiii. 24—28). Jeſus Chriſt deferred entering his public work, till he was thirty years of age: John Baptiſt ſeems to have begun his miniſtry rather earlier in life. The Levites had alſo an honourable exemption from this employment after twenty years ſervice, though they were ſtill to be occupied in one way or other, (viii. 26). Theſe laws are not binding in the letter of them upon the miniſters of the goſpel; but they afford much uſeful *practical* inſtruction, as it will be ſeen in the proper place

V. 5. *When*, &c.] The law prohibiting any, but the High Prieſt one day in the year, to enter into the moſt holy place, muſt have admitted of an exception, whilſt the Iſraelites were continually removing in the wilderneſs: that exception therefore was expreſsly made, and the directions given relating to it, which muſt be religiouſly obſerved, or the ſervice could not be ſafely performed, Uzzah loſt his life, and David was greatly diſcompoſed in ſpirit, through inattention in this matter long after. (Notes, &c. 2 *Sam.* vi. 6—11. 1 *Chron.* xiii. 9—14. xv. 1, 2. 12—15.)

V. 6. *The covering*, &c.] Theſe coverings were not intended for ſecurity and decent reſpect, but for concealment: and they not only marked the reverence due to holy things, but the myſteriouſneſs of the things ſignified by thoſe types, and the darkneſs of that diſpenſation. Some ſuppoſe that the cloth of blue repreſented the azure firmament, which interpoſes betwixt us and the majeſty of heaven.

V. 13,

7 And upon the table of ſhew-bread they ſhall ſpread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the diſhes, and the ſpoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread ſhall be thereon.

8 And they ſhall ſpread upon them a cloth of ſcarlet, and cover the ſame with a covering of badgers' ſkins, and ſhall put in the ſtaves thereof.

9 And they ſhall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candleſtick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his ſnuff-diſhes, and all the oil-veſſels thereof, wherewith they miniſter unto it.

10 And they ſhall put it, and all the veſſels thereof, within a covering of badgers' ſkins, and ſhall put *it* upon a bar.

11 And upon the golden altar they ſhall ſpread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' ſkins, and ſhall put to the ſtaves thereof.

12 And they ſhall take all the inſtruments of miniſtry, wherewith they miniſter in the ſanctuary, and put *them* in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' ſkins, and ſhall put *them* on a bar.

13 And they ſhall take away the aſhes from the altar, and ſpread a purple cloth thereon:

14 And they ſhall put upon it all the veſſels thereof wherewith they miniſter about it, *even* the cenſers, the fleſh-hooks, and the ſhovels, and the baſons, all the veſſels of the altar; and they ſhall ſpread upon it a covering of badgers' ſkins, and put to the ſtaves of it.

15 And when Aaron and his ſons have made an end of covering the ſanctuary, and all the veſſels of the ſanctuary, as the camp is to ſet forward; after that, the ſons of Kohath ſhall come to bear *it:* but they ſhall not touch *any* holy thing, leſt they die. Theſe *things are* the burden of the ſons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

16 And to the office of Eleazar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt *pertaineth* the oil for the light, and the ſweet incenſe, and the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil, *and* the overſight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein *is*, in the ſanctuary, and in the veſſels thereof.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites:

19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the moſt holy things; Aaron and his ſons ſhall go in, and appoint them every one to his ſervice, and to his burden.

20 But they ſhall not go in to ſee when the holy things are covered leſt they die.

21 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

22 Take alſo the ſum of the ſons of Gerſhon, throughout the houſes of their fathers, by their families:

23 From thirty years old and upward unto fifty years old ſhalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the ſervice, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

24 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the Gerſhonites, to ſerve, and for burdens.

25 And they ſhall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' ſkins that *is* above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the inſtruments of their ſervice, and all that is made for them; ſo ſhall they ſerve.

27 At the appointment of Aaron and his ſons ſhall be all the ſervice of the ſons of the Gerſhonites, in all their burdens, and in all their

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V. 13, 14.] The ſacred fire ſeems to have been thus taken care of and removed in ſome of the cenſers or veſſels; as well as the brazen altar, both being covered from view by the purple cloth.

V. 18. *Cut ye not off,* &c.] Eleazar and the prieſts would be chargeable with the death of the Kohathites, if they failed to give them proper cautions and directions; or permitted them to gaze irreverently or curiouſly upon the holy things; which they might carry, but muſt not ſee.

V. 25.] (iii. 25.)

their ſervice: and ye ſhall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.

28 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the ſons of Gerſhon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge *ſhall be* under the hand of Ithamar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt.

29 As for the ſons of Merari, thou ſhalt number them after their families, by the houſe of their fathers:

30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old ſhalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the ſervice to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

31 And this *is* the charge of their burden according to all their ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and ſockets thereof,

32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their ſockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their inſtruments, and with all their ſervice: and by name ye ſhall reckon the inſtruments of the charge of their burden.

33 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the ſons of Merari, according to all their ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt.

34 And Moſes and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation, numbered the ſons of the Kohathites, after their families and after the houſe of their fathers;

35 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice for the work in the tabernacle in the congregation.

36 And thoſe that were numbered of them, by their families, were two thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty.

37 Theſe *were* they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moſes and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moſes.

38 And thoſe that were numbered of the ſons of Gerſhon, throughout their families, and by the houſe of their fathers,

39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation;

40 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the houſe of their fathers, were two thouſand and ſix hundred and thirty.

41 Theſe *are* they that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Gerſhon, of all that might do ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moſes and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD.

42 And thoſe that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Merari, throughout their families, by the houſe of their fathers,

43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation;

44 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, after

V. 44. *Three thouſand*, &c.] The family of Merari contained a leſs number in the whole, than either of the other families in the tribe of Levi; yet there was among them the moſt effective men, and they were charged with the heavieſt part of the ſanctuary. The ſum total of effective Levites was very ſmall, compared with that of the other tribes; yet there would be more by far than could at once be employed in this ſervice. But they might carry by turns, and eaſe one another, and thus do the whole expeditiouſly and cheerfully. They would alſo have their own tents to remove, and their own families to take care of.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though the miniſter of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, nor war with carnal weapons; yet he muſt "enter into the hoſt of "the Lord;" and both in his perſonal conflict againſt ſin and Satan, and in doing the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, muſt boldly fight the good fight of faith with the proper weapons of his warfare, ſound doctrine, fervent prayer, and an holy example. Peculiar gravity, prudence, humility, ripeneſs of judgment and experience, meekneſs and patience are neceſſary for the proper performance of the miniſterial duty, to the glory of God, to the edification of the church, and to the ſilencing of gainſayers; and miniſters are expoſed to many temptations from the ſmiles and frowns of men, from popularity and oppoſition. It is therefore far more adviſable for thoſe who are intended for this ſacred ſervice, to ſpend much previous time in retirement, ſtudy, meditation, and communion with God; that they may come forth well prepared and

after their families, were three thouſand and two hundred.

45 Theſe *be* thoſe that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Merari, whom Moſes and Aaron numbered, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moſes.

46 All thoſe that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moſes and Aaron and the chief of Iſrael numbered, after their families, and after the houſe of their fathers;

47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the ſervice of the miniſtry, and the ſervice of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation;

48 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, were eight thouſand and five hundred and fourſcore.

49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moſes, every one according to his ſervice, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. A command to exclude the lepers and unclean from the camp, 1—4. *2d. The law of reſtitution repeated and enlarged upon,* 5—10. *3d. The law for the trial of a woman ſuſpected by her huſband of adultery,* 11—31.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Command the children of Iſrael, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an iſſue, and whoſoever is defiled by the dead:

3 Both male and female ſhall ye put out, without the camp ſhall ye put them; that they

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furniſhed for uſefulneſs, when a proper occaſion is afforded: than that they ſhould, by an indiſcreet and hurtful zeal, be allowed or encouraged to violate the apoſtle's rule, (1 *Tim.* iii. 6). From the neglect of attending to this caution, many miſchiefs have ariſen both to individuals, and to the cauſe of God. Nor is that time loſt, which is ſpent in preparation for this important ſervice. When, however, men are entered, and have health and ſtrength, and work aſſigned them, they ſhould loſe no time, nor miſs any opportunities of uſefulneſs; for ſuch loſt opportunities may be regretted, but cannot be recalled. When the faithful ſervants of God grow in years, and their natural vigour abates, they muſt not be cenſured, if they labour not ſo much as they formerly did, eſpecially in thoſe ſervices which require bodily exertion. Even if it pleaſe God to lay them quite aſide by ſickneſs and infirmity, they may ſtill ſerve the church of God by their prayers, and examples of faith, patience, and obedience; and they are ſtill entitled to reſpect, and maintenance from it. They ought not indeed, and will not deſire, to ceaſe from labour whilſt they are capable of it: but they muſt not murmur, if they are thus diſcharged, or if they ſee others "increaſe whilſt they decreaſe." For the Lord will do his work by a ſucceſſion of ſervants; and he will ſhew them all in their turns that he can do without them; that the work is all in his hand; that while he employs them, he does not ſtand in need of them; and that he can eaſily ſend out others in their ſtead when they are no longer ſerviceable.—Though we are not under the comparative obſcurity and ſeverity of the Moſaic diſpenſation; yet we ſhould remember that heavenly things muſt be treated with reverence, and not curiouſly, contemptuouſly, or preſumptuouſly enquired into. Nor is this only to be noted, in regard to the greater and more aweful myſteries of religion, but with reſpect to every thing pertaining to it; for it is very dangerous to attempt being wiſe above what is written, or to intrude into thoſe things over which God hath purpoſely thrown a vail. And the miniſters of God, and thoſe who have attained to a ſuperior degree of influence, or authority, ſhould caution and hinder their juniors, or the people, from ſuch intruſion. Indeed the rule holds good in all things: we ought to prevent others from committing ſin to the utmoſt of our ability, and as far as conſiſts with other relative duties; and we are acceſſary to the guilt and the ruin of thoſe who periſh through our neglect. But though the Lord is great and holy, and vengeance belongeth unto him; and though we are mean, polluted, and guilty creatures; we may yet approach him with ſafety, comfort, and confidence, in the way which he hath opened, in the means which he hath appointed, and according to the directions which he hath preſcribed: but not otherwiſe.—In this moveable world changes await us; but wherever we remove, we muſt be ſure to take our God and religion with us, to prefer his houſe and worſhip to our temporal intereſts, and to ſerve him with the prime of our health and ſtrength.—Ere long this earthly houſe of our tabernacle will be taken down: but if it hath been an habitation of God through the Spirit; this great and ſolemn removal will be all under the hand of Jeſus, our merciful High Prieſt; he will give his angels a charge to convey our ſouls inviſibly to glory; and all the conſtituent parts of the tabernacle ſhall, by his power, be brought together to heaven, and there raiſed up again incorruptible, immortal, and glorious; and ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord; therefore let us quicken and comfort ourſelves and each other with theſe words. (Notes, *Rom.* viii. 11. 1 *Theſ.* iv. 17, 18.)

NOTES.

CHAP. V. Ver. 1—4.] The camps of Iſrael being now formed, with the ſanctuary of the Lord in the centre of them; in honour of him who thus dwelt amongſt them, the laws before given were ordered to be put in immediate execution. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* xiii. xiv. xv.)

V. 6.

they defile not their camps, in the midſt whereof I dwell.

4 And the children of Iſrael did ſo, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſo did the children of Iſrael.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

6 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, When a man or woman ſhall commit any ſin that men commit, to do a treſpaſs againſt the LORD, and that perſon be guilty;

7 Then they ſhall confeſs their ſin which they have done; and he ſhall recompenſe his treſpaſs with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth *part* thereof, and give *it* unto *him* againſt whom he hath treſpaſſed.

8 But if the man have no kinſman to recompenſe the treſpaſs unto, let the treſpaſs be recompenſed unto the LORD, *even* to the prieſt, beſide the ram of the atonement whereby an atonement ſhall be made for him.

9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Iſrael, which they bring unto the prieſt, ſhall be his.

10 And every man's hallowed things ſhall be his: whatſoever any man giveth the prieſt, it ſhall be his.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

12 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, If any man's wife go aſide, and commit a treſpaſs againſt him,

13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her huſband, and be kept cloſe, and ſhe be defiled, and *there be* no witneſs againſt her, neither ſhe be taken *with the manner;*

14 And the ſpirit of jealouſy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and ſhe be defiled; or if the ſpirit of jealouſy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and ſhe be not defiled;

15 Then ſhall the man bring his wife unto the prieſt, and he ſhall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley-meal;

V. 6. *That men*, &c.] Theſe words intimate that men are very prone to acts of fraud and diſhoneſty, and that they are very common among them; though every one of them be "a treſpaſs againſt the Lord," (*Lev.* vi. 1—7.)

V. 8. *If the man*, &c.] If the perſon injured were dead, or removed to a great diſtance, and had left no near relation to whom the reſtitution might properly be made; the prieſt was appointed to receive it, when the criminal offered the treſpaſs-offering. Doubtleſs real poverty would excuſe a man from making reſtitution: yet this exception is not made; for men are ready enough to find out excuſes for themſelves, where their own intereſt is concerned. They therefore who eſtabliſh general ſcriptural rules of duty, ſhould not be cenſured though they mention not every particular exception; for they are warranted in doing ſo by the word of God.—This law ſhews the abſolute neceſſity of reſtitution in one form or other, to the injured perſon, to his relations, to the poor, or to pious uſes; for, as Mr. Henry obſerves, 'It is certain, while that, which is 'got by injuſtice, is knowingly retained in the hands, the 'guilt of the injuſtice remains upon the conſcience, and is 'not purged by ſacrifice or offering, prayers or tears; for 'it is *one* and the *ſame* continued act of ſin *perſiſted* in.' Some ſay, that this doctrine tends to embarraſs tender conſciences: but be that as it will, it is the doctrine of right reaſon, and of the *word of God;* and it ſeems rather calculated to detect hypocrites, and to direct the tender conſcience to a proper conduct, which ſpringing from faith in Chriſt will make way for inward peace.

V. 9, 10.] This would encourage and recompenſe the prieſts' conſtant attendance on their work: for it is God's command, (though ſeldom man's rule) that the miniſter, who does the moſt work in due manner, ſhould have the beſt maintenance.

V. 12. *If any man's wife*, &c.] This remarkable law would be a powerful preſervative to the wives in Iſrael in the hour of temptation, when opportunity, importunity, and ſecrecy were combined; and would alſo induce them to watch againſt all occaſions of exciting ſuſpicion in the breaſts of their huſbands. On the other hand it would prevent cruel treatment, which ſuch ſuſpicions might occaſion, "through the hardneſs of their hearts," when the crime could not be proved, nor the rage of jealouſy allayed: and it would leſſen the nnmber of haſty divorces. It would alſo prevent the guilty from eſcaping with impunity, and the innocent from continuing under injurious ſuſpicions; and in many ways ſubſerve the intereſts of purity and of domeſtic peace, both by always hanging over the heads of the perſons concerned, as it were, for their warning; and by being at ſome times carried into execution.

V. 13. *No witneſs*, &c.] The adulterer and adultereſs were both ordered to be put to death; when they were detected and the fact proved, (*Lev.* xx. 10): but when the huſband entertained ſuſpicions, and could not bring proof, he was allowed, and the wife was called upon, to make this ſolemn appeal to an heart-ſearching God.

V. 15. *Barley-meal*, &c.] This coarſe offering, without oil or frankincenſe, implied the baſeneſs of the crime of which the woman was ſuſpected, and the mournful ſtate of the family. It was a memorial, as ſolemnly referring the deciſion to the Lord, and calling upon him to bring the culprit's iniquity to remembrance, and to puniſh it, in caſe ſhe were guilty.

V. 17.

meal; he ſhall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincenſe thereon; for it *is* an offering of jealouſy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 And the prieſt ſhall bring her near, and ſet her before the LORD.

17 And the prieſt ſhall take holy water in an earthen veſſel; and of the duſt that is in the floor of the tabernacle the prieſt ſhall take, and put *it* into the water.

18 And the prieſt ſhall ſet the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealouſy-offering: and the prieſt ſhall have in his hand the bitter water that cauſeth the curſe.

19 And the prieſt ſhall charge her by an oath, and ſay unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou haſt not gone aſide to uncleanneſs *with another* inſtead of thy huſband, be thou free from this bitter water that cauſeth the curſe:

20 But if thou haſt gone aſide *to another* inſtead of thy huſband, and if thou be defiled, and ſome man hath lain with thee beſide thine huſband;

21 Then the prieſt ſhall charge the woman with an oath of curſing: and the prieſt ſhall ſay unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curſe and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to ſwell:

22 And this water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to ſwell, and *thy* thigh to rot. And the woman ſhall ſay, Amen, amen.

23 And the prieſt ſhall write theſe curſes in a book, and he ſhall blot *them* out with the bitter water;

24 And he ſhall cauſe the woman to drink the bitter water that cauſeth the curſe: and the water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall enter into her, *and become* bitter.

25 Then the prieſt ſhall take the jealouſy-offering out of the woman's hand, and ſhall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar.

26 And the prieſt ſhall take an handful of the offering, *even* the memorial thereof, and burn *it* upon the altar, and afterward ſhall cauſe the woman to drink the water.

27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it ſhall come to paſs, *that* if ſhe be defiled, and have done treſpaſs againſt her huſband, that the water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall enter into her, *and become* bitter, and her belly ſhall ſwell, and her thigh ſhall rot: and the woman ſhall be a curſe among her people.

28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then ſhe ſhall be free, and ſhall conceive ſeed.

29 This *is* the law of jealouſies, when a wife goeth aſide *to another* inſtead of her huſband, and is defiled;

30 Or when the ſpirit of jealouſy cometh upon

V. 17. *Holy water*, &c.] The water of the laver, in which the prieſts were uſed to waſh, was put into a *mean* earthen veſſel, with the duſt of the tabernacle in it in order for the woman to drink. This implied the diſgrace which ſhe lay under, and the ſhame to which ſhe would be expoſed if guilty, as well as the puniſhment that ſhe would juſtly endure; in which every thing relating to the worſhip of a holy God, would, as it were, combine together for her deſtruction, and enter into her bowels with an aweful curſe. —This water was called the bitter water, from the bitter effects, which would follow when drunk by a guilty perſon.

V. 19. *Inſtead of*, &c.] Or, *being under the power of thy huſband*; that is, being a married woman, which was the grand aggravation of the crime.

V. 22. *Amen, amen.*] This two-fold ſolemn conſent of the woman to the aweful appeal to God, referred to both parts of it, and implied a hearty deſire to be dealt with according to her guilt or innocence; and an acknowledgment of the righteouſneſs of God in inflicting this dreadful vengeance upon thoſe who were guilty. Such an appeal to God could not be made by a guilty perſon, without the moſt infidel hardneſs of heart, and preſumptuous defiance of him. The Jewiſh writers ſay, that if the woman refuſed the oath, and confeſſed her guilt, ſhe was not put to death, but only divorced without a dowry.

V. 23. *In a book*, &c.] That is on a piece of parchment, or ſomewhat uſed for writing on; the writing was waſhed off into the water, as if the curſe were thus transferred to the water, and infuſed in it.

V. 27. *And*, &c.] This water could produce no harm by its own natural efficacy, or hurt any innocent perſon. But if any woman added the aweful guilt of ſuch perjury to adultery, God would ſupernaturally thus puniſh her. The Jews have a tradition that the adulterer would alſo be ſeized with, and die of a ſimiliar diſeaſe; which probably was not unlike in its nature to that

upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and ſhall ſet the woman before the LORD, and the prieſt ſhall execute upon her all this law:

31 Then ſhall the man be guiltleſs from iniquity, and this woman ſhall bear her iniquity.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. The Nazarite's vow, 1—8. *2d. The rule of his conduct, in caſe he inadvertently contracted uncleanneſs,* 9—12. *3d. The ſacrifices to be offered, and the rites to be obſerved, at the expiration of his vow,* 13—21. *4th. The form in which the prieſts were to bleſs the people,* 22—27.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When either man or woman ſhall ſeparate *themſelves* to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to ſeparate *themſelves* unto the LORD;

3 He

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that loathſome diſeaſe, with which God in theſe latter ages has ſhewn his abhorrence of lewdneſs; though more immediate in its effects.

V. 31. *Guiltleſs*, &c.] Though the huſband's jealouſy were groundleſs, yet he ſhould not be accounted guilty, if he took this method of clearing up the matter: but otherwiſe it would lead him to do thoſe things which would bring guilt upon him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The people of God ſhould withdraw and be ſeparate from ſuch as are unclean, through the dominion of indulged iniquity, and exclude them, as far as they are able, from their fellowſhip; and if, under the maſk of hypocriſy, they will affront the Lord, and profane his holy ordinances, by an unhallowed intruſion, they do it at their peril: aſſuredly ſuch ſhall never enter "that holy city, where the taber-"nacle of God ſhall be with men, and he will dwell with "them," (*Rev.* xxi. 3. 27;) but will be without, "where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of "teeth." Among them will moſt certainly be found thoſe *unrighteous* perſons, who have *unjuſtly* obtained, and as *unjuſtly* keep poſſeſſion of, their neighbour's property: and the man who pretends to piety, and profeſſes faith in the atonement of Chriſt, and thus encourages himſelf in diſhoneſty, as groſsly affronts the Lord, as he, who ſubſtitutes his honeſty or morality in the ſtead of the Redeemer's merits and ſacrifice, and in contempt of them, as the price of his acceptance with God.—The confeſſion, the reſtitution, and the treſpaſs-offering, muſt always go together.—God's abhorrence of, and vengeance againſt adultery, appear conſpicuous in this chapter: and though we have no law of a jealouſy-offering to detect, nor any other law to execute puniſhment upon, adulterers and adultereſſes: and they may either conceal or glory in their ſhame, and the impunity with which they tranſgreſs: yet they may be ſure their ſin will at laſt find them out; for God himſelf will detect the moſt ſecret, and confound the moſt daring offenders. And as his providence ſtamps infamy upon ſinners of this claſs, in thoſe dreadful diſeaſes with which he viſits them, and with which they infect, plague, and curſe one another in this world; ſo his word denounces the ſevereſt vengeance againſt them in the world to come. But all approaches to, and occaſions or appearances of, this horrid crime muſt be ſtudiouſly avoided: and married perſons eſpecially ſhould act in ſuch a manner as to inſpire mutual confidence in each other; and ſhould avoid every intimacy, and every word and look, which may excite uneaſineſs in the other's breaſt. For conjugal affection is prone to jealouſy, and Satan delights in exciting "a ſpirit "of jealouſy" in the hearts of huſbands and wives; knowing that it is alike tormenting to ſuſpect or to be ſuſpected. He knows alſo that ſuch ſuſpicions ſubvert domeſtic peace, ſet aſide family religion and the proper education of children, and expoſe to manifold temptations to every kind of ſin, on each ſide: ſo that what begun with heedleſs imprudence and groundleſs jealouſy, often terminates in deep criminality and the moſt fatal conſequences. We ſhould therefore watch and pray, and avoid the appearances and beginnings of evil; and be careful that we neither heedleſsly excite, nor cauſeleſsly entertain, thoſe tormenting ſuſpicions which lead to ſuch direful evils. If, however, we have a clear conſcience and a true faith, we may bear up under the vileſt aſperſions; and God in due time will clear up our characters by one means or other, while we thus commit them to his keeping, and convert our affliction into a bleſſing. Whether it be our croſs to ſuſpect, or to be cauſeleſsly ſuſpected, in this or any other caſe, Chriſtianity will teach us how to obtain comfort under it and extract good from it. But how ſhould men tremble at the thoughts of appealing to God, when their own hearts condemn them! "for God is greater than their hearts, and knoweth all things," and will be ſure one day tremendouſly to revenge ſuch a daring affront.—Senſual luſts will ſurely end in bitterneſs: and they who delight in curſing ſhall be filled with it. Finally, they who allow hypocriſy and iniquity in their hearts, under a profeſſion of faith, will find that all the truths of God's word (by which the true believer becomes joyful and fruitful in the works of righteouſneſs;) all the ordinances of his houſe, and all the diſpenſations of his providence, will concur to increaſe their guilt, obduracy, and condemnation.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *Vow of a Nazarite*, &c.] The word *Nazarite* ſignifies *ſeparation*. Some were appointed by the Lord himſelf, before their birth, to be Nazarites all their days, as Sampſon, (*Judg.* xiii. 7;) and John the Baptiſt, (*Luke* i. 15.) Samuel was devoted by his mother to be a perpetual Nazarite, when he was "aſked of the "Lord," before his conception, (1 *Sam.* i. 11:) and the family of the Rechabites were a ſort of Nazarites from one generation to another, by the injunction of Jonadab their progenitor, (*Jer.* xxxv.) But in general the Nazarites became ſuch by a voluntary vow, which any perſon

3 He ſhall ſeparate *himſelf* from wine, and ſtrong drink, and ſhall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of ſtrong drink, neither ſhall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moiſt grapes, or dried.

4 All the days of his ſeparation ſhall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the huſk.

5 All the days of the vow of his ſeparation there ſhall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he ſeparateth *himſelf* unto the LORD, he ſhall be holy, *and* ſhall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

6 All the days that he ſeparateth *himſelf* unto the LORD, he ſhall come at no dead body.

7 He ſhall not make himſelf unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his ſiſter, when they die; becauſe the conſecration of his God *is* upon his head.

8 All the days of his ſeparation he *is* holy unto the LORD.

9 And if any man die very ſuddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his conſecration; then he ſhall ſhave his head in the day of his cleanſing, on the ſeventh day ſhall he ſhave it.

10 And on the eighth day he ſhall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the prieſt, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

11 And the prieſt ſhall offer the one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he ſinned by the dead, and ſhall hallow his head that ſame day.

12 And he ſhall conſecrate unto the LORD the days of his ſeparation, and ſhall bring a lamb of the firſt year for a treſpaſs-offering: but the days that were before ſhall be loſt, becauſe his ſeparation was defiled.

13 And

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might make, of peculiar ſeparation from the world and devotedneſs to the exerciſes of religion, for a limited time and under certain regulations. (Notes, xxx.) It is numbered among the diſtinguiſhing favours which God conferred on Iſrael, that "he raiſed up of their young men for Nazarites," (*Amos* ii. 11;) whence we may infer, that their prayers, examples, and inſtructions, were conſidered as a public bleſſing. Chriſt was called a *Nazarene*, out of reproach, as having lived at Nazareth; yet the Scripture was thus fulfilled, that he ſhould be ſo called: but it is not agreed what Scripture foretold this. He was not a Nazarite according to the letter of the law, but he was the ſubſtance of this ſhadow; ſeparated by the Father and by his own voluntary undertaking, to glorify God in the redemption of his church; he would have nothing to do with the intoxicating pleaſures of the world and ſin; he touched no unclean thing, was ſeparate from ſinners, and perſevered in his purpoſe, till he had fulfilled his appointed time of tribulation, ſelf-abaſement, and ſuffering on earth; then, though perfectly obedient to the law, he finiſhed the whole of his engagement by his ſacrifice on the croſs; and riſing from the dead, aſcended into heaven, to drink, with his redeemed people in his Father's kingdom, the new wine of heavenly joy, (*Matt.* xxvi. 29.) His diſciples alſo are Nazarites, ſeparated from the world, abſtaining from worldly luſts, and given up to ſerve God and their generation.

V. 3, 4.] The *drinking of wine* was an emblem, both in it's nature and effects, of the intoxicating pleaſures of ſin and ſenſe; from this in every form, and from all approaches to it, the Nazarites were commanded to abſtain. There is nothing in Scripture which bears the moſt remote affinity to the religious orders of the church of Rome, except theſe Nazarites: but mark the difference, or rather the contrariety. The religious in that church are forbidden to marry; but no ſuch reſtriction was laid upon the Nazarites. They are commanded to abſtain from meats; but the Nazarites might eat any food allowed the other Iſraelites. They are not generally prohibited wine, not even on faſting days; but the Nazarites might not drink it at any time. Their vow is perpetual to the end of their lives; the Nazarites vow was only for a limited time, at their own diſcretion; and in certain caſes not unleſs allowed by huſbands or parents. Much of the ſame contrariety is obſervable in other rules of men's invention for faſting, and for ſingular ſanctity.

V. 5. *All*, &c.] By this growth of hair the Nazarites were known in the ſtreets, (*Lam.* iv. 7, 8.) It had a ſingular appearance of mortification to the world, and diſregard to the body. It might alſo denote their peculiar ſubjection to the Lord, (1 *Cor.* xi. 10—15.)

V. 7. *Unclean*, &c.] That is, he muſt not attend their funerals; thus the Nazarites ranked with the High Prieſt. (Notes, *Lev.* xxi.)

V. 9—12.] There was no penalty appointed to be inflicted upon thoſe who wilfully violated their vow of being Nazarites, nor any ſacrifice required of them: they muſt anſwer for ſuch profane trifling with the Lord another day. But if, by the ſudden death of any perſon near them, they contracted uncleanneſs, they would not only be unclean ſeven days, and require purifying as other Iſraelites did, (xix. 11, 12;) but muſt offer ſeveral ſacrifices of atonement for ſin, loſe all the paſt time, and begin over again to conſecrate their appointed ſeaſon of ſeparation to the Lord. No ceremonial uncleanneſs cauſed this interruption, except the touch of the dead body of man; whoſe death came in by ſin, and was thus accounted unclean, till the death,

13 And this *is* the law of the Nazarite: When the days of his ſeparation are fulfilled, he ſhall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;

14 And he ſhall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he-lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a burnt-offering, and one ewe-lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a ſin-offering, and one ram without blemiſh for peace-offerings.

15 And a baſket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings.

16 And the prieſt ſhall bring *them* before the LORD, and ſhall offer his ſin-offering, and his burnt-offering.

17 And he ſhall offer the ram *for* a ſacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, with the baſket of unleavened bread: the prieſt ſhall offer alſo his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

18 And the Nazarite ſhall ſhave the head of his ſeparation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and ſhall take the hair of the head of his ſeparation, and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings.

19 And the prieſt ſhall take the ſodden ſhoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the baſket, and one unleavened wafer, and ſhall put *them* upon the hands of the Nazarite, after *the hair of* his ſeparation is ſhaven.

20 And the prieſt ſhall wave them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: this *is* holy for the prieſt, with the wave-breaſt, and heave-ſhoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

21 This *is* the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and of* his offering unto the LORD for his ſeparation, beſides *that* that his hand ſhall get: according to the vow which he vowed, ſo he muſt do after the law of his ſeparation.

22 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

23 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his ſons, ſaying, On this wiſe ye ſhall bleſs the children of Iſrael, ſaying unto them,

24 The LORD bleſs thee, and keep thee;

25 The LORD make his face ſhine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

27 And

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death, burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, as it were, ſanctified death and the grave to his people. But the ſoul dead in ſin, and the dead works attending that ſtate, are ſtill as polluted and polluting as ever.

V. 13—20.] By theſe ſacrifices and ceremonies at the expiration of his term, the Nazarite was taught to confeſs that his performance of the vow needed atonement and forgiveneſs, being mixed with ſin; to acknowledge that the honour of all, which was done well, belonged to the Lord; and that, though he was no longer a Nazarite, he was ſtill by duty and choice the devoted ſervant of the Lord, and conſidered communion with a reconciled God as the delight of his ſoul. The hair was ſhaven off, as a token that the vow was accompliſhed; and was burnt, not *on the altar*, as if it could make atonement, but *under the peace-offerings*, implying the gracious acceptance of ſuch ſervices by a God of peace and love.

V. 21. *Beſides that*, &c.] If the Nazarite were poor this ſacrifice would be accepted: but if he had it in his power, it would be proper to offer free-will offerings alſo. It ſeems the pious friends of the Nazarites frequently were at charges with them on theſe occaſions, and they feaſted together on the ſacrifices, (*Acts* xxi. 23—26.)

V. 23. *Ye ſhall bleſs*, &c.] The prieſts in this action typified the Lord Jeſus, who came to bleſs us, "and whilſt he was bleſſing his diſciples, was parted from them, and "was taken up into heaven." As the miniſters of the Lord, they very ſolemnly prayed for, and pronounced a bleſſing upon, the people. The apoſtolical epiſtles are moſt of them cloſed with a ſimilar benediction: and it has been a common and very proper cuſtom, for the miniſter, in Chriſtian aſſemblies, to diſmiſs the congregation in the ſame manner; both as expreſſing his affectionate good-will to them, and his fervent prayers for them; and as aſſuring them in the Name of God, that a bleſſing will attend on thoſe who are indeed the Lord's believing people: for hypocrites have no ſhare in theſe ſpecial benefits.

V. 24—26.] The word JEHOVAH is three times ſolemnly repeated in this benediction, and the Jews themſelves have ſuppoſed that there is ſome great myſtery contained in that repetition. When we compare it with the form of Chriſtian baptiſm, "Into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt;" with the bleſſing Paul pronounces on the Corinthians, which is in common uſe amongſt us, (2 *Cor.* xiii. 14;) and with St. John's ſalutation of the churches, (*Rev.* i. 4, 5:) we can be at no loſs to determine what that myſtery is. Sinners are bleſſed with ſpiritual bleſſings by the triune God of ſalvation, the Father who choſe, the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Ghoſt who ſanctifieth, all the elect people of God.—To be in

27 And they ſhall put my name upon the children of Iſrael, and I will bleſs them.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. The heads of the tribes of Iſrael preſenting, for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, ſix covered waggons and twelve oxen: and the Lord's acceptance and diſpoſal of them, 1—9. *2d. Each of them on his day preſenting oblations and ſacrifices in behalf of himſelf and his tribe,* 10—88. *3d. The Lord ſpeaking to Moſes from above the mercy-ſeat,* 89.

AND it came to paſs on the day that Moſes had fully ſet up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and ſanctified it, and all the inſtruments thereof, both the altar, and all the veſſels thereof, and had anointed them, and ſanctified them,

2 That the princes of Iſrael, heads of the houſe of their fathers, (who *were* the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered,) offered.

3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, ſix covered waggons, and twelve oxen; a waggon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle.

4 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

5 Take *it* of them, that they may be to do the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou ſhalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his ſervice.

6 And Moſes took the waggons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites.

7 Two waggons and four oxen he gave unto

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in body and ſoul under the almighty protection of God our Saviour; to enjoy his favour, as the ſmile of a loving father, or as the enlightening chearing beams of the ſun, whilſt he mercifully forgives our ſins, pities our ſorrows, ſupplies our wants, ſatisfies our deſires, and communicates ſweet peace to the conſcience and conſolation to the heart; and whilſt he graciouſly accepts our perſons and ſervices, and prepares us by his grace for eternal glory: theſe things form the ſubſtance of this bleſſing, and the ſum total of all bleſſings; and in ſuch a rich inventory, worldly joys are not worthy to be mentioned.

V. 27. *Put my name*, &c.] That is, 'Bleſs them in 'my name, as my people: as ſuch pray for them; and 'direct them to expect and aſk all their bleſſings from me: 'and ſo doing they ſhall not be diſappointed; for my name 'ſhall be their honour, ſecurity, confidence, and comfort.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, as undertaking and perſevering in the work, for which he had ſeparated and ſanctified himſelf, without contracting any defilement, or ſhrinking from any ſelf-denial or ſuffering, till he had completed his deſign, and arrived with honour and glory unſpeakable at the joy ſet before him: let us not forget, that he is not only our Surety, but alſo our Example. For his ſake we muſt renounce worldly pleaſures, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, ſeparate from ſinners, touch no unclean thing, be indifferent about the outward indulgence or adorning of our bodies, be intent about the inward feeding and adorning of our ſouls, make an open profeſſion of our faith, moderate our natural affections, be abſtracted from worldly cares, be ſpiritually minded and devoted to God's ſervice, zealous for his glory, and deſirous to be an example and a bleſſing to his people, and all around us.—If after profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, any wilfully and finally apoſtatize and return to wickedneſs, "there remains no other ſacrifice; "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery "indignation," (*Heb.* x. 26, 27.) The true Nazarite, however, will never thus deliberately and entirely renounce his vow of ſeparation: but he may and will inadvertently commit ſin and contract defilement; and then muſt he renew his repentance, exerciſe faith in the one great ſacrifice of Chriſt, and begin all over again, as when he firſt "fled for "refuge to the hope ſet before him." And when the Chriſtian is finiſhing his courſe of faith and holineſs, of ſelf denial and bearing the croſs daily, and is about to cloſe his eyes in death, and open them in the realms of uninterrupted joy: he will ſtill acknowledge that he has nothing to truſt to, but the blood of Chriſt our great ſacrifice for ſin; as the beſt which he hath done has been mixed with ſin, and needs forgiveneſs; he will give the glory to the Lord of all that he hath done in any meaſure well; will value reconciliation and communion with God as his only confidence and comfort; and will depart with thankful acknowledgments for the paſt, perhaps with joyful, at leaſt with peaceful, expectations for the future, to go and drink the new wine of the kingdom with his beloved Redeemer in the realms of bliſs.—Then indeed will the great High Prieſt pronounce him bleſſed in the name of the triune Jehovah, which is put upon him; then will he ſhine and ſmile upon him ineffable joys; then will he wipe all tears from his eyes, and be gracious to him for ever. In hopes of this immortal crown, let us here chearfully endure the croſs: let us fear nothing but diſhonouring our profeſſion: let us ever be prepared for the approach of death, which often comes "very ſuddenly." Let us be very watchful in a world ſo full of pollutions; let us remember, that the higher we ſtand in profeſſion of holineſs, the ſlighter inadvertency will diſgrace us and diſhonour our God. And may the Lord keep, and bleſs and comfort in life, and at death, and for ever, with all the bleſſings of ſalvation, the writer and every reader of theſe remarks, Amen!

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *Fully*, &c.] Thoſe things which were expreſsly commanded were firſt performed, before theſe voluntary oblations were preſented, as expreſſions of the good will of the princes to the ſervice of God. There

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unto the ſons of Gerſhon, according to their ſervice.

8 And four waggons and eight oxen he gave unto the ſons of Merari, according unto their ſervice, under the hand of Ithamar, the ſon of Aaron, the prieſt.

9 But unto the ſons of Kohath he gave none; becauſe the ſervice of the ſanctuary belonging unto them *was*, *that* they ſhould bear upon their ſhoulders.

10 And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar, in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, They ſhall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

12 And he that offered his offering the firſt day was Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah.

13 And his offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them *were* full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

14 One ſpoon of ten *ſhekels* of gold, full of incenſe:

15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

16 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

17 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab.

18 On the ſecond day Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar, prince of Iſſachar, did offer.

19 He offered *for* his offering one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy

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is ſome difficulty in ſettling the date of this chapter; whether it comes in here in its proper order; or whether the things recorded in it were antecedent to ſeveral of the tranſactions before related. But it ſeems ſufficient for all uſeful purpoſes to obſerve, that the tabernacle was erected, the prieſts conſecrated, the camp formed, the Levites appointed to their work, and all things put into a regular train for carrying on the ſervice of the ſanctuary, before theſe oblations were made. And as the Scripture is not, it is not neceſſary that we ſhould be, very exact in aſcertaining dates. Some ſuppoſe that the twelve days, appointed for the oblation of the princes, were coincident with the giving of many of the laws already mentioned, and immediately followed the conſecration of the ſanctuary and of the prieſts.

V. 7—9.] The ſockets of ſilver and braſs alone are computed to have weighed more than eight tons, which would be fully ſufficient to load theſe four waggons: ſo that the ſons of Merari would ſtill have much to carry upon their ſhoulders; as probably the ſons of Gerſhon alſo had. The Kohathites had in all but a moderate weight; and in reverence to the ſacred things, they were ordered to be carried at all times upon the ſhoulders of the Levites of the family of Kohath. The prieſts were of this family, and aſſiſted in the ſervice. The neglect of this rule was David's firſt and chief miſtake, when Uzzah was ſmitten.

V. 10. *And the princes*, &c.] It is probable that there was ſome difference of rank, and of poſſeſſions, among the Iſraelites, even in their Egyptian bondage: and conſequently at their departure, their chief men would obtain a larger portion of the ſpoil of Egypt; by which means they were enabled to preſent theſe oblations. Though ſome perſons conjecture, that the princes not only offered *in the behalf*, but at *the expence* of their ſeveral tribes.

V. 11. *The Lord ſaid*, &c.] As the princes were preparing to bring their oblations all together, the Lord gave this order, both to prevent confuſion, to increaſe the ſolemnity, that the prieſts might not be over-burdened with work, and that they might have leiſure to grow more expert by daily practice. And, as a large proportion of the ſacrifices was feaſted upon, both by the prieſts and people, it would alſo prevent exceſs or waſte, and promote hoſpitality, to have only one oblation at a time. The princes offered in the ſame order, in which the tribes had been arranged in the encampment, (which is an argument that they offered after the camp was formed:) and, though one tribe was more numerous and wealthy than another, they all preſented exactly the ſame oblations and ſacrifices; for they were all equally intereſted in the ſanctuary and worſhip of God, and were all willing to expreſs an equal affection for them. Every one's offering is nevertheleſs particularly mentioned; for the Lord takes pleaſure in accepting and recording the willing ſervices of his people.

V. 12. *Nahſhon*, &c.] Nahſhon is the only one, who is not called *a prince* in the hiſtory of this tranſaction. Some ſuppoſe that this was an humiliating circumſtance intended to counterbalance his pre-eminence; that he might not be exalted above meaſure: others conjecture, that this title was omitted, becauſe it was reſerved for Chriſt, who was to deſcend from this tribe.

V. 13, 14.] The ſilver chargers or diſhes might be uſeful for the meat-offerings, and to contain the fleſh of the ſacrifices, when the prieſts feaſted upon it. The ſilver bowls would be uſeful for the drink-offerings and to receive the blood for ſprinkling: and the golden ſpoons were ſuited to the ſervice of the altar of incenſe. Probably the princes had noticed, that the furniture for the tabernacle was not, in theſe particulars, ſuited to the reſt, or was not ſufficient for the purpoſe.

ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

20 One ſpoon of gold of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

22 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

23 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the ſon of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, *did offer*.

25 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

26 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

28 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

29 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Eliab the ſon of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the ſon of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, *did offer*.

31 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

32 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

34 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

35 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Elizur the ſon of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, *did offer*.

37 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

38 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels* full of incenſe:

39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

40 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

41 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

42 On the ſixth day Eliaſaph the ſon of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, *offered*.

43 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, a ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

44 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

46 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

47 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Eliaſaph the ſon of Deuel.

48 On the ſeventh day Eliſhama the ſon of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, *offered*.

49 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

50 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels* full of incenſe:

51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

52 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

53 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of

of the first year. This *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day *offered* Gamaliel the son of Padahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh.

55 His offering *was* one silver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

56 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

58 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

59 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan, the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, *offered*.

61 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

62 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

64 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

65 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, *offered*.

67 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

68 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

70 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

71 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, *offered*.

73 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

74 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

76 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

77 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira, the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, *offered*.

79 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

80 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

82 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

83 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold;

85 Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

86 The

86 The golden ſpoons *were* twelve, full of incenſe, *weighing* ten *ſhekels* apiece, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary: all the gold of the ſpoons *was* an hundred and twenty *ſhekels*.

87 All the oxen for the burnt-offering *were* twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the firſt year twelve, with their meat-offering: and the kids of the goats, for ſin-offering, twelve.

88 And all the oxen for the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings *were* twenty and four bullocks, the rams ſixty, the he-goats ſixty, the lambs of the firſt year ſixty. This *was* the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed.

89 And when Moſes was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to ſpeak with him, then he heard the voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the mercy-ſeat that *was* upon the ark of teſtimony, from between the two cherubims: and he ſpake unto him.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The lamps of the golden candleſtick lighted at God's command, 1—4. 2d. The Levites ordained to their office, 5—22. 3d. The time of their ſervice preſcribed, 23—26.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto Aaron, and ſay unto him, When thou lighteſt the lamps, the ſeven lamps ſhall give light over againſt the candleſtick.

3 And Aaron did ſo: he lighted the lamps thereof over againſt the candleſtick; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

4 And this work of the candleſtick *was of* beaten gold; unto the ſhaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was* beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had ſhewed Moſes, ſo he made the candleſtick.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

6 Take the Levites from among the children of Iſrael, and cleanſe them.

7 And thus ſhalt thou do unto them, to cleanſe them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them ſhave all their fleſh, and let them waſh their clothes, and *ſo* make themſelves clean.

8 Then

V. 89. *With him*, &c.] That is, with the Lord, who ſpake to Moſes in an audible voice; as he had often before done, and as he probably ſpake to the High Prieſts afterwards, when they enquired of him by Urim and Thummim.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, whom the providence of God hath diſtinguiſhed as princes, nobles, or wealthy perſons, ſhould diſtinguiſh themſelves by taking the lead and ſetting the example in every good work; with liberal hearts deviſing liberal things: for this is the proper improvement of their talents. It is alſo very deſirable that a liberal mind ſhould be under the direction of prudence and diſcretion: and that ſuch perſons ſhould advert to the circumſtances of the times, to the ſtate of the church and its miniſters, and to the neceſſities of thoſe around them; that none of their bounty may be waſted in uſeleſs expence, but all wiſely directed to the ſubſtantial benefit of thoſe who need it.—The people of God have no occaſion to be diſcouraged in the proſpect either of heavy ſervices, or of fiery trials: for he can ſend them ſeaſonable and unexpected relief whenever he pleaſes; and will be ſure to proportion his aſſiſtance to their neceſſities.—Every thing in the worſhip of God ſhould be done decently and in order, and as may beſt promote edification. On ſome occaſions it may be proper to employ much time, and expend much money in his ſervice. And the growing Chriſtian will not be weary or complain of this; but will account it his gain, his pleaſure, and his honour to be thus occupied.—All our works of piety and charity muſt be accompanied with an humble acknowledgment of our ſinfulneſs, and a believing dependence on the ſacrifice of Chriſt; they muſt ſpring from love to our reconciled God, gratitude for the bleſſings of redemption, and unreſerved ſurrender of ourſelves unto him; and a diſpoſition to delight in doing his will, and in rendering him all the praiſe. Such good works are "ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God, "through Jeſus Chriſt." The Lord will delight to honour thoſe, who thus honour him. He will remember and record their expreſſions of faith and love. He will in this world commune with ſuch diſciples from his mercy-ſeat, between the cherubim, by anſwering their prayers, and counſelling and comforting their hearts: and he will at the day of judgment publiſh to the whole aſſembled world, diſtinctly and particularly, the fruits of holineſs which by his grace they produced on earth, as *evincing* them the heirs of the kingdom prepared for his people, from before the foundation of the world. (Notes, &c. *Matt.* xxv. 31—46.)

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *Over againſt*, &c.] The candleſtick was all in one piece; but the ſeven lamps were formed ſeparate, and might be taken off, or fixed upon the candleſtick, as occaſion required. It is a tradition of the Jews, that the middle lamp was lighted from the altar of burnt-offering and the other lamps from it; which being done, each lamp gave light to that part of the ſanctuary, that was "over againſt it," and the whole was lighted. Thus the light, which comes from Chriſt by his word and Spirit, is *inſtrumentally* communicated from one to another in the church of God, and every true miniſter, and believer in his place, gives light over againſt him; and the light is diffuſed wider and wider: (Notes, &c. *Matt.* v. 14—16. *Phil.* ii. 15.)

V. 7. *Cleanſe them*, &c.] The Levites were not diſtinguiſhed

8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering.

9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together.

10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD, *for* an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

16 For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

17 For all the first-born of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born of the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

18 And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel.

19 And I have given the Levites *as* a gift to Aaron, and to his sons, from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes: and Aaron offered them *as* an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them,

22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites;

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tinguished from the other Israelites by any prescribed garments; nor were they washed, or anointed, in the manner the priests were: but though they were set apart with less solemnity, to mark the inferiority of their office, and because they were not so *expressly* typical of Christ as the priests; yet there was equally a remembrance of sin, both in its guilt and defilement, and of the need of atonement and sanctification, in the separation of them to their office. Their clothes were washed; they were sprinkled with the water of purifying, (xix. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—27;) a sin-offering, and a burnt-offering were sacrificed in their behalf; and they shaved all their flesh, according to the ceremony of the leper's purification. (*Lev.* xiv. 8.) This might denote the "laying apart all filthiness, and *superfluity* of naughtiness;" (*Jam.* i. 21;) the mortification of natural depravity, and the renouncing of all unnecessary worldly avocations and employments, that they might more entirely devote all their time and attention to the services assigned them.

V. 10. *Shall put their hands*, &c.] By this ceremony the people expressed their ready consent to the substitution of the Levites in the stead of the first-born, and their surrender of them to the Lord for the purpose of serving at the sanctuary.

V. 19. *A gift to Aaron*, &c.] When Aaron had offered the Levites as an offering unto the Lord; the Lord gave them back to Aaron, who might now with comfort make use of their assistance, "*in*, or *at* the tabernacle;" that is, in the court thereof; or "*about* the tabernacle," that is, when it was removed. They likewise assisted in the offering those sacrifices by which atonement was made. This and the other services being duly performed, without any unallowed intrusion of the other tribes, would preserve the people from those terrible effects of the divine displeasure, which they might otherwise have apprehended.

V. 24. *From*, &c.] At the age of twenty-five the Levites began to attend upon the ordinary services of the tabernacle;

vites; from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more;

26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1st. Some explanatory additions respecting the observance of the Passover, 1—14. *2. The cloud directing the marches and encampments of Israel in the wilderness,* 15—23.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.

3 In the fourteenth day of this month at even ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.

4 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.

5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

6 And

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but were neither required, nor allowed, to assist in its removal, till they were thirty years old. Probably at the age of twenty-five the Levites were, in after-ages, solemnly admitted to their office, according to the prescribed order of this chapter.

V. 26. *Shall minister*, &c.] It appears that the Levites, above fifty years of age, might superintend and assist their junior brethren in the ordinary offices; and give them, and the people counsel and instruction: but they were exempted from carrying the tabernacle, and from other laborious services.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jesus Christ is the only Light of our dark sinful world; in virtue of his atonement he diffuses by his holy word divine light around: and all, which is called illumination, that is not derived from, or does not accord to, that light, is but the greater and more dangerous darkness. (Notes, *Isaiah* viii. 20. *Matt.* vi. 22, 23.) Ministers, in searching the Scriptures, and comparing one part of them with another, and the whole with what they experience in themselves and observe around them; and imparting the knowledge thus acquired by preaching the gospel, and by various other methods, are in their several places, "burning and shining lights," communicating the light, which they have received from Christ, to those over against them, in their congregations and neighbourhoods: and many private Christians do the same in their several connections; especially if their knowledge and profession of the truth be accompanied with the ornament and light of an holy and exemplary conversation. In this way one is enlightened from another, and the light of truth and righteousness will be diffused ere long through all the nations of the earth.—But so depraved and polluted is every one, born of Adam's fallen race, that none can in any way approach or serve God, except as a humble penitent he plead guilty, depend upon the Saviour's atoning blood, and be sanctified by the participation of his Holy Spirit, poured upon him as purifying water. And if the heart be cleansed by divine grace, the outward conduct and conversation will be clean likewise.—The Lord himself hath provided for, and appointed the method and means of, our cleansing; and given us "exceeding great and precious promises," for our encouragement in using those means; but having these promises, we are exhorted "to *cleanse ourselves* from all filthi-"ness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of "God," (2 *Cor.* vii. 1.) and to lay aside and put off our sinful pursuits and indulgences, that we may serve God with our bodies and our souls, which are his, having been bought with a price. Every Christian should be thus cleansed from sin, separated from the world, and presented to the Lord, as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to him: but the ministers of Christ especially. When they are regularly appointed to the sacred office, with the approbation of their brethren and of the church of God, and when they are faithful and diligent in their work, so far from being considered as an useless part of the community, as they are often profanely represented; they may fairly be shewn to be the most useful members of society, by their examples, labours, and prayers, in repressing sin which is the ruin of, and in promoting righteousness which exalteth, any people; and in making known that great atonement by which the wrath of God is averted from our guilty souls, and from guilty nations. Persons of another stamp, called ministers, are not pleaded for: but those who act up to their character should never be deserted of men, and will never be forsaken of God in their old age; as they will be useful by their counsel and influence, when they can no longer labour; and "when the chief Shep-"herd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory "which fadeth not away." (Note, 1 *Pet.* v. 1—4.)

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1—5.] This chapter is dated before any other of the events recorded in this book. Some suppose that the Passover was no more celebrated from this time till the people arrived in Canaan; that the law did not require that it should be kept in the wilderness, (*Exod.* xii. 25. *Josh.* v. 10;) and that the interruption intimated these ordinances to be only a shadow of good things to come,

6 And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the paſſover on that day; and they came before Moſes and before Aaron on that day:

7 And thoſe men ſaid unto him, We *are* defiled by the dead body of a man; wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed ſeaſon among the children of Iſrael?

8 And Moſes ſaid unto them, Stand ſtill, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.

9 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

10 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If any man of you, or of your poſterity, ſhall be unclean by reaſon of a dead body, or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he ſhall keep the paſſover unto the LORD.

11 The fourteenth day of the ſecond month at even they ſhall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*.

12 They ſhall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the paſſover they ſhall keep it.

13 But the man that *is* clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the paſſover, even the ſame ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people; becauſe he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed ſeaſon, that man ſhall bear his ſin.

14 And if a ſtranger ſhall ſojourn among you, and will keep the paſſover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the paſſover, and according to the manner thereof, ſo ſhall he do: ye ſhall have one ordinance, both for the ſtranger, and for him that was born in the land.

15 And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely*, the tent of the teſtimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire until the morning.

16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night.

17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Iſrael journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Iſrael pitched their tents.

18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Iſrael journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they reſted in the tents.

19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Iſrael kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

20 And *ſo* it was when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

21 And *ſo* it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and *that* the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether *it was* by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

22 Or *whether it were* two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children

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come, and not intended for perpetuity in the church. It is indeed remarkable that many parts of the ceremonial law, notwithſtanding the preciſion with which they were delivered, were but little attended to by the people of Iſrael. Upon this ſuppoſition, there was occaſion for this renewed commandment, if the Paſſover was again to be celebrated in the wilderneſs, in order to its being obſerved more properly after their arrival in Canaan. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* xii.)

V. 6—8.] Though the laws reſpecting ceremonial defilement had not hitherto been explicitly given, yet ſeveral intimations had been made, which created ſcruples in the conſciences of theſe perſons: they counted it their duty and privilege to eat the Paſſover, but feared to eat it with their uncleanneſs upon them: they were deſirous of knowing the Lord's will that they might do it, and therefore very properly referred the caſe to the deciſion of Moſes. And he with equal propriety declined the determination of it by his own judgment, and applied for direction to the Lord; who provided as follows for this caſe, and ſome other unavoidable hindrances.

V. 15. *Tent of*, &c.] The tent of the teſtimony was the weſt end of the tabernacle over the moſt holy place, where was the ark of the covenant, with the tables of the law, which *teſtified* Iſrael to be the Lord's people, and him to be their God. (Note, *Exod.* xxv. 16.)

V. 15

dren of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up they journeyed.

23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. The command for making and using the silver trumpets, 1—10. *2d. The march of the Israelites from mount Sinai to the wilderness of Paran,* 11—28. *3d. Moses's intreaty of Hobab to continue with them,* 29—32. *4th. His prayer at the removal, and at the resting of the ark,* 33—36.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

5 When

V. 15—23. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* xl. 34—37.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are so immersed in the things of time and sense, that the most pure minds have need to be stirred up, by way of remembrance, to perform such things as they have before been instructed in and attended to, (2 *Pet.* i. 12—15. iii. 1.) But when such reminding has its proper effect; when men consider attendance on the ordinances of God as their privilege, and every impediment as their affliction, it is a very hopeful token.—Alas! in what a sad dilemma are multitudes of professing Christians! they are *habitually unclean* through indulged lusts and unrepented sins, and cannot approach the Lord's table without a presumptuous profanation: yet in staying away they neglect 'their 'bounden duty and service;' and virtually confess that they have no part in Christ, but are liable to bear the heavy load of their own iniquity, and to be cut off by the righteous judgment of God; not so much for disregarding the outward sign of salvation, as for neglecting the great salvation itself. Yet when their uncleanness becomes their burden, and they sincerely enquire what they must do? the case grows more hopeful. For they are directed to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; and having been "washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of "the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," they may, when occasion is again afforded them, approach with comfort to partake of that holy ordinance. But all should reflect, that if they are not prepared for the Lord's table, they are not fit for death and judgment; and if they be, it is very sinful to neglect this profession of our faith in, and love and obligations to, him who loved us and gave himself for our sins; and with his dying lips said to his disciples, "do this in remembrance of him."—Under difficulties and distress of conscience it is very proper to consult pious and faithful ministers, and plainly to state the case unto them. And it becomes them to be accessible, and tender to such conscientious enquirers: and not only to offer them the best counsel they can; but in doubtful cases to take time for deliberation, and consulting the word of God, in order to give them a satisfactory solution: and as the Lord makes a difference between occasional defilements and presumptuous disobedience, they should do the same. We may often without our own fault, be deprived of the opportunity of attending on God's ordinances; but we shall not lose the blessing, if our hearts be right with God: and when we have necessarily been kept away at one time, we should be doubly careful to improve the next opportunity. —Blessed be God, that we strangers of the Gentiles are admitted to participate in the blessings of Christ our Passover, who is sacrificed for us: but let us be careful to celebrate the sacred feast after the prescribed manner; as true penitents and spiritual pilgrims, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—Though we are not under the miraculous direction of the cloud: yet God's providence appoints the bounds of our habitation, and God's word is the perfect and sufficient rule of our conduct. Wherever our lot is cast, let us study contentment there. Whenever we are called upon to remove, let us be careful that we act according to God's commandment, and in dependence on his promises: and when we pass through temptation and tribulation, or the gloomy vale of death, if his presence go with us, we must be safe, and shall be happy. Let us beg of *Him*, therefore, to choose for us our places of abode in this world, our time of removal out of it, and our everlasting inheritance; for he never chose amiss for those, that were enabled to refer all their concerns to his decision.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 2—10.] These trumpets, besides their direct usefulness, were evidently intended to typify the preached gospel. The priests alone were allowed to blow them; and as they were at that time but two priests, the sons of Aaron the High Priest, but two trumpets were ordered to be made: but we read afterwards, (2 *Chron.* v. 12.) "of one hundred and twenty priests sounding with "trumpets." In allusion to the uses assigned to them in this and other places, (*Lev.* xxiii. 24. xxv. 9. *Joel* ii. 15, 16,) we may observe that the preached gospel sounds the alarm to sinners; calls them to repent of their sins; proclaims liberty to the captives and slaves of Satan; collects together the spiritual worshippers of God in all ages and nations, to keep their solemn fasts of godly sorrow, and feasts of holy joy; summons them to become strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and both directs and encourages their heavenly journey; excites them to combat against Satan,

5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.

6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.

7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.

8 And the sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets: and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

11 And it came to pass, on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.

12 And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

13 And they first took their journey, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

14 In the first *place* went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah, according to their armies: and over his host *was* Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

15 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

16 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

17 And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle.

18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward, according to their armies: and over his host *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur.

19 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

20 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21 And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary; and *the other* did set up the tabernacle against they came.

22 And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward, according to their armies: and over his host *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud.

23 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son Pedahzur.

24 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25 And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, *which was* the rearward

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Satan, the world, and sin; and animates them with the assurance of victory; leads their attention to, explains, and suitably affects them with, the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ; and is a constant memorial of the Lord's gracious presence with them, for their encouragement and protection, and for a terror and dismay to their enemies; (2 *Chron.* xiii. 12. *Isaiah* xxvii. 13. lviii. 1.) It is also necessary that it give a distinct, precise, and intelligible sound, according to the persons addressed, or the end proposed, whether for conviction, humiliation, consolation, exhortation, reproof, or instruction; for "if the trum-"pet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself "for the battle?" (1 *Cor.* xiv. 7—9.)

V. 11—13.] After the Israelites had continued nearly a year at mount Sinai, (*Exod.* xix. 1.) to settle every thing respecting their future worship, they began their march to Canaan: whither they might speedily have arrived, had they not renewed their rebellions. This may typify, that though true religion often begins with the knowledge of the holy law of God, and that humiliation for sin which thence results: yet we must not always abide there, but go on towards perfection, in an acquaintance with Christ and his gospel, and those effectual encouragements, motives, and assistances to holiness which it proposes, (*Heb.* vi. 1, 2.)—Previously to the removal of the cloud the people had had an express command to set out on their journey, (*Deut.* i. 6—8.) In consequence of this we may suppose, that they got all ready for their march; when the removing of the cloud gave the signal for their actually setting off.

V. 21. *Did set up the tabernacle*, &c.] That is, the Gershonites and Merarites, who marched before the rest for that purpose, (17.)

V. 25. *The rearward*, &c.] This division not only

rearward of all the camps throughout their hoſts: and over his hoſt *was* Ahiezer the ſon of Ammiſhaddai.

26 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Aſher *was* Pagiel the ſon of Ocran.

27 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the ſon of Enan.

28 Thus *were* the journeyings of the children of Iſrael, according to their armies, when they ſet forward.

29 And Moſes ſaid unto Hobab, the ſon of Raguel the Midianite, Moſes' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD ſaid, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the LORD hath ſpoken good concerning Iſrael.

30 And he ſaid unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31 And he ſaid, Leave us not, I pray thee; foraſmuch as thou knoweſt how we are to encamp in the wilderneſs, and thou mayeſt be to us inſtead of eyes.

32 And it ſhall be, if thou go with us, yea, it ſhall be, that what goodneſs the LORD ſhall do unto us, the ſame will we do unto thee.

33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days journey, to ſearch out a reſting-place for them.

34 And the cloud of the LORD *was* upon them by day when they went out of the camp.

35 And it came to paſs, when the ark ſet forward, that Moſes ſaid, Riſe up, LORD, and let thine enemies be ſcattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it reſted he ſaid, Return, O LORD, unto the many thouſands of Iſrael.

CHAP.

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brought up the rear of Iſrael, but gathered under it the mixt multitude which followed them.

V. 29. *Hobab, the ſon of Raguel*, &c.] It is moſt probable that Jethro was the ſame perſon with Reuel, or Raguel, and that Hobab was his ſon and Moſes' brother-in-law; who had remained with the Iſraelites, when his father had departed from them, or had come to them afterwards, (*Exod.* ii. 18. iii. 1. xviii.)

V. 31, 32.] Though the people were under the immediate direction of God in their march: yet in reſpect of the conveniences or inconveniences of the places through which they paſſed, they might receive profitable cautions and inſtructions from a perſon acquainted with the deſert.—Some however render the words, "thou "mayeſt be to us inſtead of eyes," in the paſt tenſe, and interpret it as a thankful acknowledgment of the advantages which Iſrael had derived from Hobab's counſel and direction; for which they could make him no amends, except he would go with them, and ſhare the kindneſs which the Lord had in reſerve for them. We may ſuppoſe that Hobab was withdrawn from his firſt purpoſe, and accompanied them. We ſhall hereafter read of his poſterity.

V. 33. *The ark*, &c.] It is doubtful whether the ark was carried ſeparately before the camp, or with the other ſacred things in the midſt of it: though the former ſuppoſition agrees beſt with the account here given. The cloud however, which *above* was diffuſed as a canopy over the heads of the people in the day, and afforded light to them all by night, ſo reſted beneath upon the ark, that in directing their march, the ark on which it reſted might very properly be ſaid to go before them, to ſingle out the particular ſpot on which they were to halt for refreſhment; and after three days the ſpot on which they were to encamp.

V. 35, 36.] Moſes as the leader, though Aaron was the High Prieſt, ſolemnly addreſſed the Lord in this emphatic prayer; which David uſed, probably on a ſimilar occaſion, (*Pſalm* lxviii. 1.) The expreſſion, "the many "thouſands of Iſrael," is in the original, *the thouſand thouſands of Iſrael*, among whom Moſes thus beſought the Lord again to manifeſt his preſence, and take up his reſidence.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſounding of the trumpet of the goſpel, being God's appointed ordinance, demands the ſerious attention of all to whom it is ſent. Let our character, experience, ſituation, duty, or trials be what they may, this trumpet, when properly uſed by the miniſters of Chriſt, will give ſuch a certain diſtinct ſound, as at one time or other exactly to ſuit our caſe, and to afford us that warning, direction, encouragement, or exhortation, of which we ſtand in need; and *in this manner* we ſhould expect to be taught, counſelled, and comforted of the Lord. But they who ſound this trumpet ought to be very ſkilful, experienced, faithful, tender, and obſervant both of the word of God, of their own hearts, and of the ſituations of the people; leſt they give falſe alarms, or neglect to give the alarm when it is neceſſary, (*Ezek.* xxxiii. 2—9;) leſt by an uncertain ſound they encourage thoſe who need reproof; or diſcourage the hearts of thoſe who ſhould be comforted; or in any other way defeat thoſe ends for which the preaching of the word is intended.—"Bleſſed is the people who know this joyful "ſound," (*Pſalm* lxxxix. 15—18,) and underſtand its diſtinct meaning, whether it call them to watch and pray, to weep, or to rejoice, to attack their enemies or to reſiſt their aſſaults, to march forwards with alacrity or to endure the labours of the way with patient perſeverance; and who ſo underſtand its ſound, as to pay it that prompt and implicit obedience, which the diſciplined ſoldier doth to the ſound of the trumpet, yet exactly diſtinguiſhing the true ſignal from every kind of falſe alarm. Such perſons will never want warning, encouragement, guidance, inſtruction,

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1*st. The Israelites complaining, and the fire of the Lord burning amongst them, but quenched through Moses' prayer,* 1—3. 2*d. The people weary of the manna, and lusting after flesh; the Lord displeased; Moses grievously complaining of his burden; provision promised to Israel, and assistance afforded to Moses, with some concurring circumstances,* 4—30. 3*d. The quails sent in vast abundance, but accompanied with a terrible plague, as the effect of the divine displeasure,* 31—35.

AND *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp.

2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

3 And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

4 And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

5 We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons,

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struction, or counsel, through the whole of their journey: Though they have here no continuing city, but are always removing from one wilderness to another: yet by hearkening to the sound of the gospel, they will follow the ark in all their removals and be taught habitually to depend on the promises, the power, faithfulness, love, and meritorious mediation of the Son of God, to obey his commands, and imitate his example in their proper place and station, and ever to abide under the care of his providence, enjoy the comforts of his Spirit, and have fellowship with him in his ordinances. Thus will the Lord himself go before them to find them out resting-places from time to time by the way; he will give them rest to their souls on earth, until he bring them to his heavenly rest; he will arise to scatter his and their enemies, and all that hate him shall flee before him; and he will return to and continue with every individual, and with all the thousands of Israel, always even unto the end of the world: for his promise is, that he will never leave them nor forsake them, and this is the substance of all their prayers and desires.—Whilst we are thus journeying to the place of which the Lord has spoken to us, and hath promised to give us; we should endeavour, by our general good behaviour and tranquil chearfulness, by special acts of kindness, and by pressing exhortations and persuasions, to induce our relatives, friends, and neighbours to attend us in our pilgrimage: endeavouring to convince them, that the Lord is with us, that he hath spoken good concerning us, that he hath good in reserve for us, and that it is for their true advantage to accompany us; frankly proposing to them a participation in all our privileges and comforts, and assuring them of all the kindness which God shall enable us to do unto them. By persevering attempts of this kind, and by fervent prayers for them, we may frequently overcome the reluctancy of those, who at first were unwilling to renounce the pleasures of sin, or the interests of the world, were loth to encounter the hardships of the journey, or valued not the promised inheritance.—Though in every thing our dependence must be ultimately placed upon the Lord; yet we may use the services of men as instruments of good to us, and should in our turn aim to be instrumental to the good of others: and thus we may be as eyes, and ears, and hands to each other, for our mutual comfort, and to the glory of our common Lord, (Note, 1 *Cor.* xii. 15—26.)

We should also be careful, that we begin every undertaking, especially those in which the public and the church of God are concerned, with earnest prayer for direction, assistance and success: and not only should ministers, but magistrates and princes also, be men of prayer, as well as men of activity, integrity, and ability; for whatever talents and instruments are employed, the Lord alone sends prosperity. Finally, in all our supplications at the throne of grace, the many thousands of Israel should be remembered by us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *The people complained,* &c.] *The people were as complainers*; that is, they secretly murmured against Moses, and against the Lord.—When we consider the wonderful works wrought for them before their eyes; the excellent laws they had received; the mild government under which they lived; the manner in which their camp was victualled, watered, guarded, and guided; and the tokens which they enjoyed of the Lord's special presence and favour; we are ready to enquire, what grounds of complaint they could have? But some would be dissatisfied that they and their friends were excluded from the government, and the priesthood; some would fret at being kept so long in the wilderness; others would be weary, (though their feet did not swell,) with marching for three days together without resting; and various occasions of discontent would be found among so vast a multitude. Since the affair of the golden calf the people had appeared obedient and tractable, and the rulers liberal and chearful in affording their assistance: but their evil dispositions, though overawed, were not slain; soon therefore they revived, and produced more fatal effects than ever.—The people seem to have been slain, as Nadab and Abihu had been, by fire from the Lord, or by flashes of lightning, probably from the fiery pillar. Though they had several times before murmured against the Lord, they had not been thus punished; for not having known so much of the Lord's will, nor seen so much of his glory, nor experienced so much of his kindness, they were more excusable before than at this time.—Yet even now the fire consumed only some of those who resorted to the uttermost parts of the camp, to associate with the mixt multitude that followed them. (4.)

V. 3. *And,* &c.] *Taberah* signifies *burning*.

V. 4. *The mixt multitude,* &c.] This *lusting* for other food

melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

6 But now our ſoul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beſides this manna, *before* our eyes.

7 And the manna *was* as coriander-ſeed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

8 *And* the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taſte of it was as the taſte of freſh oil.

9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

10 Then Moſes heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moſes alſo was diſpleaſed.

11 And Moſes ſaid unto the LORD, Wherefore haſt thou afflicted thy ſervant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy ſight, that thou layeſt the burden of all this people upon me?

12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy boſom, (as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking child,) unto the land which thou ſwareſt unto their fathers?

13 Whence ſhould I have fleſh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, ſaying, Give us fleſh, that we may eat.

14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, becauſe *it is* too heavy for me.

15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy ſight; and let me not ſee my wretchedneſs.

16 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Gather unto me ſeventy men of the elders of Iſrael, whom thou knoweſt to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may ſtand there with thee.

17 And I will come down, and talk with thee there; and I will take of the Spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they ſhall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear *it* not thyſelf alone.

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food than manna began among the mixt multitude, but ſpeedily ſpread among the Iſraelites; who were not only guilty of diſcontent, and inordinate deſire of fleſh to eat, but limited the power of God, as if it were impoſſible for him to give them it in their preſent circumſtances. (*Pſalm* lxxviii. 19—31.)

V. 7—9.] Theſe particulars are here mentioned concerning the manna, in order to illuſtrate the goodneſs of the Lord to Iſrael in giving them, without trouble or expence, ſo ſuitable, nouriſhing, and palatable a food; and which afforded them variety alſo, by the different ways in which it might be prepared. Thus the ingratitude, and unreaſonableneſs of the people in their luſtings were ſtrongly marked.—We do not read that they were ſickly, or feeble, through feeding continually upon manna: though the greedineſs of their appetite for other food drank up their ſpirits, and cauſed "their ſoul to dry away."—And, though it would not have been right to have ſlain all their numerous flocks and herds, neither would the whole have ſatisfied their *luſtings*: yet, had they not been too covetous, or too deſirous of dainty-meats, they might from time to time have feaſted upon fleſh, by preſenting in turn peace-offerings to the Lord. But to their diſſatisfied mind every thing appeared worthleſs in compariſon of the Egyptian diet, which yet was probably nothing better than the ordinary food of the pooreſt people.

V. 10. *Every man*, &c.] The former complaining was only a ſecret diſcontent, but this broke out into an open and general diſſatisfaction, and portended a revolt.

V. 11—15.] Moſes had indeed a very difficult and troubleſome work aſſigned him: and the expreſſive ſimilitude he uſed, would be better underſtood by the Iſraelites, than it is by us; being taken from the circumſtance of the *fathers* carrying the young children during their long marches in the wilderneſs, for which the *mothers* would generally be unable. Yet he cannot be excuſed in imitating the people in their murmurs againſt the Lord; in complaining of the honours and favours beſtowed upon him; in expoſtulating with God as if he dealt unkindly and unjuſtly with him; in magnifying his own ſervices, and ſpeaking as if *he* were required to ſupply the people with fleſh; and above all in begging for immediate death, as his only poſſible relief, and the greateſt inſtance of favour which the Lord could ſhew him.

V. 16. *Whom thou knoweſt*, &c.] Moſes had ſaid, that "he was not able to bear all the people *alone*." (14.) The Lord therefore graciouſly condeſcended to aſſign him helpers, whom he might chooſe for himſelf, out of ſuch perſons, as he knew to be *elders*, not only in reſpect of years, but in wiſdom and ability, and in the influence and authority which they poſſeſſed in their ſeveral tribes and diviſions. It is moſt probable, that in conſequence of Jethro's advice, (*Exod.* xviii. 17—26,) Moſes before this had aſſiſtants in the adminiſtration of juſtice, and in the affairs of civil government. But it had been reſerved to him "to be for the people to Godward." In this department the Lord, on this occaſion, appointed him co-adjutors, endued with ſpecial wiſdom and grace for that ſervice; whoſe aſſiſtance, counſel, influence, and authority, he might uſe in allaying the tumults, quieting the minds, or oppoſing the violence of the people when rebellious. The Sanhedrim, or council of ſeventy perſons, in the after-ages of the Jewiſh nation, ſeems to have been a continuance or imitation of this council aſſigned to Moſes.

V. 17. *I will take of the Spirit*, &c.] Not that Moſes

18 And

18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: (for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for *it was* well with us in Egypt:) therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

20 *But* even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which *is* among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

21 And Moses said, The people among whom I *am are* six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or not.

24 And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and gave *it* unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass *that*, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

26 But there remained two *of the* men in the camp, the name of the one *was* Eldad and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them, (and they *were* of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle,) and they prophesied in the camp.

27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.

28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, *one* of his young men, answered, and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

29 And Moses said unto him, Envieſt thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, *and* that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them.

30 And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let *them* fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits *high* upon the face of the earth.

32 And the people stood up all that day, and all *that* night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered

would on this account have less of the influences of the Spirit of truth, wisdom, boldness, power, and holiness: but the elders would be endued with a measure of the same Spirit, that they might be enabled and disposed cordially to concur with him in salutary measures, for the people's good.

V. 18. *Sanctify*, &c.] The people were about to witness an extraordinary manifestation of the divine power in sending them flesh to eat: but as they had greatly displeased the Lord by lusting for it and tempting him, they might expect a display also of his righteous indignation; except, by humbling themselves, seeking forgiveness of their sins, and being found in a better frame of spirit, they averted the impending storm.

V. 20. *Until*, &c.] Such plenty was about to be afforded the people, and they would feast on it so greedily, as at last entirely to loath the food they had so inordinately craved.

V. 21—23.] Some suppose that this was only the language of Moses's admiration, and an enquiry into the method how this wonderful provision was to be furnished; (*Luke* i. 34.) But the Lord's answer implies that there was some mixture of unbelief in it; (*Luke* i. 18. *Mark* vi. 37, viii. 4;) which was the more faulty, when he had seen such effects of the divine power in Egypt, and at the Red Sea; nor was the Lord's hand shortened. Moses however seems to have been fully satisfied with this further assurance; without being informed of the way in which the extraordinary provision would be made.

V. 25. *They prophesied*, &c.] These persons spake in so fluent and edifying a manner, in exhorting the people, and in praising God, and were so raised above themselves in wisdom and utterance, that all around them were sensible they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; which was a divine sanction given to their appointment, as Moses's helpers.

V. 26. *There*, &c.] Some suppose that these two persons were ceremonially unclean; others, that they humbly declined so arduous an office, or were loth to engage in it; but in the camp the Spirit of God singled them out, and they prophesied.

V. 28, 29.] Joshua would have had Eldad and Medad silenced, lest they should occasion a schism, or rival Moses; but Moses was not afraid of such effects from that Spirit which God had put upon him and them.

gathered ten homers; and they ſpread *them* all abroad for themſelves round about the camp.

33 And while the fleſh *was* yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled againſt the people; and the LORD ſmote the people with a very great plague.

34 And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah; becauſe there they buried the people that luſted.

35 *And*

V. 32. *Ten homers.*] An homer contained near eight buſhels: this is however an immenſe proportion for every individual, or even for every head of a family, and various conjectures have been framed to reduce the quantity. But the whole was intended to illuſtrate the power of God, and the eagerneſs with which the people ſeized upon this proviſion.

V. 34. *Kibroth-hattaavah,*] Or, *the graves of luſt.* The ſin of the people did not conſiſt in deſiring ſuitable food, or in eating ſuch as the Lord ſent them; but in eagerly craving unneceſſary indulgence, and intemperately gratifying their appetites when it was put in their way. The Lord, having therefore ſhewn his power by ſending this immenſe ſupply, puniſhed their diſcontent, ingratitude, and luſt, and by a peſtilence executed immediate vengeance on the ringleaders of the rebellion, (*Pſalm* cvi. 14, 15. *Deut.* ix. 22.) What multitudes are there in all places, who ſhorten their lives by exceſs of one kind or other; and whoſe ſepulchres might juſtly be called *Kibroth-hattaavah*, "becauſe there they buried the people "that luſted!"

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Fallen man is a diſcontented creature: having forſaken his proper reſt, no wonder that he feels himſelf uneaſy and wretched, how much ſoever he is proſpered or diſtinguiſhed. Pride, ambition, ſenſuality, covetouſneſs, and malice are diſeaſes of the ſoul, which cannot be abated, but will be increaſed, by indulgence; and they who are under the power of them, like a perſon in a fever, will ever be deſirous of changing their place or poſture; as if *that* were the cauſe of the diſquietude which ſprings merely from diſtemper. Whilſt this is the caſe, every providence and appointment of God will excite the ſecret or the open complaint: and though diſcontent may have and will have its degrees and paroxiſms; yet there is no cure, till the ſoul return to its reſt, in the knowledge, love, and favour of God, and in a cordial reliance on his wiſdom and acquieſcence in his will. The Lord ſees and hears, and is diſpleaſed at our murmurs, though concealed from men: the greater kindneſs we have received from him, the ſeverer correction we may expect when we thus offend: and they, who at preſent eſcape his chaſtening rod, will at length experience the dreadful effects of his fiery indignation. Indeed we all have been, and are, ſo culpable in this reſpect, as well as in others, that we have reaſon to admire and adore his patience with us, that we have been ſpared whilſt others have been puniſhed.—Sinners are under much greater obligations to their praying friends, than they are aware of; and many will cry to them to adviſe them and pray for them in their diſtreſſes and dangers, who deſpiſed and hated them before. But it is eſpecially happy for us, that Jeſus ever liveth to make interceſſion for us, when in our troubles we cry unto him for help, and to quench the fire of divine wrath which our ſins have kindled. Yet alas! how ſoon do we forget the ſmart and terror of our chaſtiſements, and relapſe into our former offences with ſtill deeper aggravation, and when we are ſurrounded with mercies, we are capable of overlooking them all, and of deeming one ſlight inconvenience an intolerable grievance! On the other hand, forgetting the anguiſh under which we have groaned in ſome former ſituation, from which we are now delivered, (*Ex.* i. 14. ii. 23, 24. iii. 7—9.) we can murmur and fret at the abſence of one imaginary or worthleſs advantage, which we then poſſeſſed: and ſcarcely any of our repinings ariſe from the want of things really needful and proper for us; but from the want of ſuch things, as are in one way or other fuel to our luſts. Nay, the very choiceſt bleſſings which God can beſtow, even the very goſpel of our ſalvation, will be ſlighted and deſpiſed by us, if we have not every thing exactly to our mind, when we are under the influence of this evil diſeaſe. We can readily blame and expreſs our aſtoniſhment at the perverſeneſs of the Iſraelites: but their conduct is only a picture of our heart, a fair ſpecimen of human nature; and we have every one of us murmured and complained before now, with as little reaſon, and with as much folly and ingratitude as they did. Let us then watch our own hearts, let us repreſs the firſt emotions of diſcontent and inordinate deſire; let us conſider frequently how many unmerited mercies we worthleſs ſinners enjoy; let us pray earneſtly for grace to teach us, "to be ſatisfied with ſuch things as "we have;" and to refer to the wiſdom, love, and faithfulneſs of God the choice of the kind, meaſure, time, and manner of receiving all our temporal ſupplies.—In general the Lord ſees it beſt for thoſe whom he loves, to be confined to the neceſſaries of life, to be poor, to fare hardly, and to receive their ſupply from day to day. And whatever the world, or the mixed multitude of mere profeſſors, may think; an inheritance in heaven, and proviſion by the way, ſought daily by prayer, and received in gratitude from our heavenly Father's love, though mean and ſcanty, is "better than the "riches of many wicked;" has in it more ſweetneſs, and leſs vexation and temptation. But if the Lord ſometimes ſurround his people with plenty, it is not for an occaſion of exceſs, but for a trial of their temperance and moderation, and that they may have a ſufficiency for every good work: and to abuſe ſuch abundance proves a carnal ſenſual mind, and will expoſe a man to the heavy wrath of God, (*Luke* xvi. 19—26.) Againſt ſuch luxury and exceſs every true Chriſtian ſhould, by his example *at leaſt*, enter his proteſt: but alas! too many are more apt to catch the infection of luſting and ſelf-indulgence from the world around them, or from the more worthleſs kind of profeſſors, than to manifeſt a decided diſapprobation of it: and many of us, though ſurrounded with far greater variety than the Iſraelites were, are ready to complain, that we are out-done in wealth, ſplendour, and the pride of life by our neighbours: and perhaps at ſome times are ready even to grow weary of our pilgrimage; to think that it was well with us when

35 *And* the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. Miriam and Aaron ſpeaking againſt Moſes, with his meekneſs on the occaſion, 1—3. *2d. God vindicating Moſes, and puniſhing Miriam with a leproſy,* 4—10. *3d. Aaron ſubmitting, Moſes interceding for Miriam, and the Lord healing her after putting her to ſhame,* 11—16.

AND Miriam and Aaron ſpake againſt Moſes, becauſe of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

2 And they ſaid, Hath the LORD indeed ſpoken only by Moſes? hath he not ſpoken alſo by us? And the LORD heard *it*.

3 (Now the man Moſes *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.)

4 And the LORD ſpake ſuddenly unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

5 And the LORD came down *in* the pillar of the cloud, and ſtood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

6 And he ſaid, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myſelf known unto him in a viſion, *and* will ſpeak unto him in a dream.

7 My ſervant Moſes *is* not ſo, who *is* faithful in all mine houſe.

8 With

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when we were in Egypt; to allow a hankering after forſaken pleaſures, almoſt to covet our former bondage, and to enquire why we came forth thence? If we are conſcious that this hath been the ſecret thought of our heart, let us repent without delay, and intreat God that it may be forgiven; leſt he ſend us thoſe things which we have inordinately deſired, and with his heavy indignation render them a curſe to us: (1 *Cor.* x. 6. 10—13.) It is not for want of power or love, that he doth not at all times indulge the deſires of his people; but becauſe his wiſdom ſees that thoſe things which they deſire as a bleſſing would be injurious to them; in which, if they do not acquieſce, he will perhaps be induced to convince them by their bitter experience that it was ſo.—We have continually cauſe to obſerve that the moſt eminent ſaints were evidently defective in the exerciſe of their ſtrongeſt graces; and even the meek and patient Moſes manifeſted a diſtruſt, peeviſhneſs, and want of ſubmiſſion, which can by no means be excuſed, though it may eaſily be accounted for. Hence we may learn that none have any thing to truſt in but the mercy of God, and the merits of Chriſt, and to watch and pray leſt we enter into temptation; and ſeeing eminent poſts are confeſſedly ſuch heavy burdens, to be contentedly obſcure, and quietly to bear our lighter croſs: nor let us forget that death is ſeldom wiſhed for, but at a time, when we are at leaſt in a frame to meet it properly and comfortably.—But the Lord is very gracious: he conſiders the trials and the weakneſs of his people; and will both forgive their ſins, commune with them, ſend them help in their troubles, and out-do their largeſt hopes and expectations. He can eaſily multiply the number, as well as increaſe the ability, of his miniſters: and though the ſpirit, which *naturally* is in us luſteth to envy, both in behalf of ourſelves, our friends, and our party, and diſpoſes us to wiſh to ſilence thoſe who follow not with us, (*Luke* ix. 49, 50;) yet the Lord gives more grace, and they who are wiſely zealous for his glory, and truly love the ſouls of men, will rejoice in the increaſe of uſeful inſtruments, though they ſhould rival and eclipſe themſelves, (*John* iii. 26—30.) If all the preſent number of the Lord's people were renderedp rophets, real, able, authoriſed miniſters of Chriſt, by the ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt; the world is wide enough, and there might be work enough for them all in calling ſinners to repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jeſus. Finally let us ſeek for thoſe pleaſures, which ſatisfy but never ſurfeit, and which will endure and increaſe for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *Miriam*, &c.] Miriam is here mentioned firſt; becauſe probably ſhe was the firſt, and the moſt criminal, in this tranſgreſſion. There are two Ethiopias mentioned in Scripture; the one in Africa ſouth of Egypt, the other in Aſia which is the ſame with ſome part of Arabia. Zipporah, being a Midianite, is ſuppoſed to have been called an Ethiopian by way of contempt. It is probable that the people thought that Zipporah had too much influence with Moſes, and were piqued, that they had not been conſulted in the choice of the elders: and it is not unlikely that there had been ſome private jar between Miriam and Zipporah, which had given occaſion to this diſſatisfaction. Perhaps they thought his marriage to a woman of another nation a diſgrace to him; and that he ought to put her away, and marry an Iſraelite.

V. 3. *Was very meek*, &c.] Moſes, writing as moved by the Holy Ghoſt, impartially records his own faults, and unreſervedly ſpeaks of the grace of God beſtowed upon him. Being thus ſingularly meek, he took no notice of the affair, to reſent it or to puniſh any perſons for their miſconduct.

V. 6—8.] Aaron and Miriam had been ſummoned to the tabernacle, probably by an audible voice from the cloud, where the Lord thus expoſtulated with them. Occaſionally by dreams and viſions the Lord made himſelf known, and revealed his will, to other prophets: but to Moſes, he ſpake openly and conſtantly, as a man with his friend. He alſo was admitted to "behold the ſimilitude of the Lord;" the "expreſs image of his perſon," even his eternal Son appearing in viſible glory. This Aaron and Miriam knew, and could not deny: and as Moſes had been honoured and favoured ſo far above them, they ſhould have been afraid of oppoſing him.

V. 9.

8 With him will I ſpeak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark ſpeeches; and the ſimilitude of the LORD ſhall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to ſpeak againſt my ſervant Moſes?

9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt them, and he departed.

10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as ſnow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *ſhe was* leprous.

11 And Aaron ſaid unto Moſes, Alas! my lord, I beſeech thee, lay not the ſin upon us, wherein we have done fooliſhly, and wherein we have ſinned.

12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the fleſh is half conſumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

13 And Moſes cried unto the LORD, ſaying, Heal her now, O God, I beſeech thee.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, If her father had but ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven days? Let her be ſhut out from the camp ſeven days, and after that let her be received in *again*.

15 And Miriam was ſhut out from the camp ſeven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in *again*.

16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderneſs of Paran.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes by divine command inſtructing and ſending ſpies to ſearch out the land, 1—20. *2d. Their expedition and return; with the evil report of ten of them, and the encouraging one of Caleb and Joſhua,* 20—33.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, 2 Send thou men, that they may ſearch the land of Canaan, which I give unto

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V. 9, 10.] The removal of the cloud expreſſed the Lord's diſpleaſure, as if he would leave ſuch a provoking people; and Miriam as the ringleader became leprous: though Aaron in honour of the prieſthood was ſpared; being ſeverely rebuked in her puniſhment, and in being the prieſt appointed to examine and pronounce her leprous.

V. 14, 15.] If Miriam had provoked her father to diſgrace her by ſome marked expreſſion of anger, ſhe would have expreſſed her ſorrow and ſhame on the occaſion by a temporary ſolitude. A ſimilar conduct under the divine rebuke was preſcribed her. When ſhe honoured God in leading the praiſes of Iſrael, (*Exod.* xv,) ſhe was honoured as one of the chief ornaments of the nation: but now for her contempt of God ſhe is lightly eſteemed, and even expelled the camp as if ſhe were a diſgrace to it!—In the mean time the people tarried for her; both as a rebuke to them, who were diſpoſed to join ſuch oppoſition to Moſes and to the Lord; and as a decent reſpect for Miriam.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who are eſpecially honoured of God, muſt expect the ſevereſt and moſt repeated trials from men; and even from thoſe whom they moſt love, and to whom they have been moſt uſeful. The contentions among brethren, and among believers are not the only effects of remaining pride, ambition, envy, and ſelfiſhneſs; but ſhould be traced back to the malicious policy of Satan, who thus deviſes to diſgrace the goſpel, and to weaken the hands and diſcourage the hearts of its beſt friends: and when the mind is diſpoſed for ſuch conteſts, the moſt frivolous and groundleſs pretences will ſuffice to excite or to vindicate them. They who are expoſed to ſuch provocations will need much meekneſs, and waiting ſimply upon the Lord will from him receive it: and the leſs anxious we are to juſtify or avenge ourſelves, the more certainly will the Lord plead our cauſe, and clear our character from every unjuſt aſperſion.—As it was ſo criminal and dangerous to oppoſe the faithful and honoured ſervant of the Lord: how dreadful will be their doom who diſhonour, deſpiſe, or oppoſe "his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed!" (*Heb.* iii. 1—6.)—They, who exalt themſelves, and ambitiouſly purſue honours, will be abaſed, and fall into diſgrace if not into deſtruction; and they, who ſpeak againſt the Lord's ſervants, may ſoon be conſtrained to make the moſt humiliating ſubmiſſions and ſupplications to them, and to confer on them the moſt honourable titles and commendations. But it is well when rebukes produce penitent confeſſions and retractations: ſuch offenders, though corrected and diſgraced, ſhall be pardoned: the Lord's people, though they have been injured by them, will readily pray for them with all earneſtneſs: Jeſus himſelf will intercede for them: they ſhall in due time be reſtored to their comfortable fellowſhip with God, and his church, and with renewed ſtrength purſue their heavenly pilgrimage. But it was happy for Aaron, and it is well for us, that the church of God hath ſuch an High Prieſt as "became us, who is holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, ſepa-"rate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens." (*Heb.* vii. 25—27.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2. *Send thou men*, &c.] The Iſraelites were arrived at the ſouthern border of the land; and might have gone up and taken immediate poſſeſſion, had not this breach intervened. We find elſewhere, (*Deut.* i. 20—23.) that the people firſt propoſed to Moſes this deſign of ſpying out the land; who not ſuſpecting the diſtruſt and unbelief which had ſuggeſted it, was pleaſed with the propoſal and conſulted the Lord about it. He permitted it to be ſo, and gave orders for the ſpies to be ſent; becauſe he had been provoked by their former rebellions, and in order to a further diſcovery of their wickedneſs

unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

3 And Moses, by the commandment of the LORD, sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men *were* heads of the children of Israel.

4 And these *were* their names: Of the tribe of Reuben; Shammua, the son of Zaccur.

5 Of the tribe of Simeon; Shaphat, the son of Hori.

6 Of the tribe of Judah; Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

7 Of the tribe of Issachar; Igal, the son of Joseph.

8 Of the tribe of Ephraim; Oshea, the son of Nun.

9 Of the tribe of Benjamin; Palti, the son of Raphu.

10 Of the tribe of Zebulun: Gaddiel, the son of Sodi.

11 Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh; Gaddi, the son of Susi.

12 Of the tribe of Dan; Ammiel, the son of Gemalli.

13 Of the tribe of Asher; Sethur, the son of Michael.

14 Of the tribe of Naphtali; Nahbi, the son of Vophsi.

15 Of the tribe of Gad; Geuel, the son of Machi.

16 These *are* the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua.

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this *way* southward, and go up into the mountain;

18 And see the land what it *is;* and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many;

19 And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not: and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. (Now the time *was* the time of the first-ripe grapes.)

21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, *were*, (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought*

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ness, and display of his justice and holiness, for his own glory, and for the future instruction of his church in all ages. There was indeed no occasion for them to search out a land, which the Lord had searched out for them, and into which he had undertaken to lead them: but there was no evil in the thing itself; and had it not been for the prevailing iniquity of both the spies and the people, the report might have been as effectual to increase and encourage their faith and hope, as it proved eventually to the contrary.—(*Joshua* ii. 23, 24.) The number and rank of these spies had a directly contrary effect, to what it would have had, if they had all been of the spirit of Caleb and Joshua.

V. 16. *Oshea—Jehoshua.*] *Oshea* may signify, *Save thou*, being a prayer for salvation: *Jehoshua* may signify, *He will save*, being an assurance of salvation in answer to prayer. But very able critics seem very conclusively to support the opinion, that the former name denotes *salvation*, the latter (being an addition of part of the name Jehovah) signifies *the Lord our salvation*. The change of Joshua's name on this occasion seems to have been intended as an encouragement to him and to the other spies, confidently to expect protection and safety from the Lord. It is well known that Jesus is the same name formed to a Greek termination; and he, the Lord our salvation, of whom Joshua was an eminent type, was thus called, "because "he shall save his people from their sins."

V. 20. *Be ye*, &c.] The service, in which the spies were employed, would require courage; for they could expect no favour from the Canaanites, in case they were detected and apprehended, and must therefore go forth at the hazard of their lives. Courage would likewise be necessary for them, that by their example and report they might encourage the people. This *in their circumstances* could only spring from strong faith, which Caleb and Joshua possessed, but the rest lacked.

V. 21, 22.] Entering at the southern border the spies surveyed the whole land even to the northern extremities; and returned back by Hebron, which was then called Kirjath-Arba, and was one of the most ancient cities in the world; and in the possession of a family of gigantic stature, which especially attracted their attention.

V. 23. *The*, &c.] *Eshcol* signifies *the cluster;* the valley being called so from the extraordinary large cluster of grapes, which the spies cut down with the branch on

brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24 The place was called the brook Eſhcol, becauſe of the cluſter of grapes which the children of Iſrael cut down from thence.

25 And they returned from ſearching of the land after forty days.

26 And they went and came to Moſes, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, unto the wilderneſs of Paran, to Kadeſh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and ſhewed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and ſaid, We came unto the land whither thou ſenteſt us, and ſurely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it.

28 Nevertheleſs, the people *be* ſtrong that dwell in the land, and the cities *are* walled, *and* very great: and, moreover, we ſaw the children of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the ſouth; and the Hittites, and the Jebuſites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the ſea, and by the coaſt of Jordan.

30 And Caleb ſtilled the people before Moſes, and ſaid, Let us go up at once, and poſſeſs it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him ſaid, We be not able to go up againſt the people; for they *are* ſtronger than we.

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had ſearched unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, The land, through which we have gone to ſearch it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof: and all the people that we ſaw in it *are* men of a great ſtature.

33 And there we ſaw the giants, the ſons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own ſight as graſhoppers, and ſo we were in their ſight.

CHAP.

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which it grew, and carried upon a ſtaff between two of them, as a ſpecimen of Canaan's fruits, into the wilderneſs to their brethren: an apt emblem of the earneſts and anticipations of heavenly joys, with which believers are favoured on earth in the conſolations of the Holy Spirit. Some ſuppoſe that Caleb and Joſhua alone brought this cluſter; the others being neither ſo favourably diſpoſed towards Canaan, nor ſo willing to labour in order to recommend it.

V. 30. *Caleb ſtilled*, &c.] *Caleb* ſignifies *all heart*; and he was evidently a man of true courage, ſtedfaſtly facing danger in the path of duty, in the exerciſe of a vigorous faith and entire dependence upon the Lord. When the report of the other ſpies, by a groſs miſrepreſentation, had excited a tumult amongſt the people, he ſtood forth to ſtill them, (doubtleſs with the concurrence of Joſhua:) and he did not ſay, 'let us go, and attack the Canaanites;' but "let "us go up at once, and poſſeſs their land:" as if he thought the forty days ſpent in ſearching it had been too long a delay, and was impatient to take poſſeſſion.

V. 31. *We be*, &c.] The Iſraelites ſeem to have been very deficient in courage, in thus fearing the Canaanites, when ſuch a multitude were all engaged to fight for themſelves and their families: but when we conſider the mighty works of the Lord which they had witneſſed in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderneſs, even to that preſent day, we muſt be moſt ſurpriſed at their *unbelief*. Had the Canaanites been ſtronger than Iſrael, they were not ſtronger than Iſrael's God, as Pharaoh had found to his coſt.

V. 32. *Eateth up*, &c.] Some ſuppoſe that there was a great mortality in the land juſt at that time, by which the Lord was weakening the enemies of Iſrael, and fighting for them; but which the ſpies perverſely aſcribed to an unwholeſome climate. At the ſame time, that they repreſented the country fruitful and populous, and the people powerful and proſperous; they inconſiſtently ſpake of the land as eating up its inhabitants!

V. 33. *As graſhoppers*, &c.] That is, 'They deſpiſed us 'as puny creatures; and we, conſcious of our inſignificancy 'and feebleneſs, trembled before them.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The righteous Lord frequently gives up to their unbelieving devices ſuch perſons as confide in their own wiſdom, policy, and vain reaſonings, in preference, or oppoſition, to his expreſs word of promiſe; and even obedience to the commandments of God, if formal and hypocritical, may prove an occaſion of men's falling into deluſion, ſin, and miſery. We ought therefore to take heed both what we do, and in what manner and with what ſpirit we do it: as the ſame action may ſpring from contrary motives, and will certainly be productive of contrary effects to ourſelves, according to the intention and diſpoſition of our hearts.—Of thoſe numbers whoſe names crowd the page of hiſtory, nay even of thoſe whoſe names are written in the Scriptures, the greater part are only recorded to their perpetual diſgrace: happy they, and they only, whoſe names are written in the book of life, in the regiſters of eternity, as the people of the Lord our ſalvation.—In the exerciſe of faith and hope, and by careful inveſtigation of the ſacred word, we may profitably ſearch out the heavenly country, hear a good report concerning it, and take encouragement to go up in the ſtrength of the Lord and poſſeſs it at once. But carnal ſenſe, and carnal preachers and profeſſors, are not ſpies to be truſted in this buſineſs: and unbelief overlooks the promiſes and power of God, magnifies every danger and difficulty, and fills the heart with overwhelming diſcouragement.—May God help us to believe, and we

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. The congregation murmuring and proposing to return to Egypt: whilst Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua in vain attempt to pacify them, 1—10. *2d. The Lord threatening their destruction: Moses interceding, and prevailing for their preservation from immediate death: and that generation doomed to fall in the wilderness, Caleb and Joshua alone excepted,* 11—35. *3d. The spies, who brought up the evil report, destroyed by a plague,* 36—38. *4th. The people attempting to march towards Canaan, though warned to the contrary by Moses; and driven back with loss by their enemies,* 39—45.

AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, would God we had died in this wilderness!

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes.

7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land.

8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us; fear them not.

10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel.

11 And

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we shall then find all things possible. Faith stills the tumult of our passions, and informs us far beyond the report of either sense or reason; whilst earnests of heavenly joys form a "witness within ourselves," that convicts of falsehood all those who deny the reality or the excellency of such spiritual blessings; and so animates us in seeking those things which are above, as to render us willing to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better than all things here below.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. *Cried*, &c.] The people vented their discontent and despondency, as children are apt to do, by clamorous lamentations.

V. 2—4.] Nothing can be conceived more absurd, as well as rebellious, than the whole conduct of Israel on this occasion. It had been at least as eligible to have fallen soldier-like, sword in hand, attempting to conquer Canaan; as to have died slaves in Egypt, or by famine and pestilence in the wilderness. Had it been possible for them to have reached Egypt, they might have expected much more severe treatment, than that which had formerly extorted their doleful groans. But this would have been absolutely impracticable; for they could not expect to be miraculously guided, victualled, and watered in their retrogade march. Yet without this such a company could never have traversed that waste howling wilderness, but, without any immediate judgment from God, must inevitably have perished. Their whole conduct was a combination of the most horrible ingratitude, blasphemy, and rebellion. The Lord was directly charged with an intention of bringing them out of Egypt, by alluring them with the most encouraging promises, on purpose to destroy them and their families: and the whole present government, of God's appointment, was intended to be set aside, and a new leader chosen, in opposition to him and defiance of him. Such is human nature! And such counsellors are discontent and passion!

V. 5. *Fell on their faces*, &c.] Probably Moses and Aaron, being shocked at the blasphemy and rebellion of the people, expected some terrible judgment upon them: and they prostrated themselves in this manner, perhaps intreating the people to desist from their fatal purpose, as well as deprecating the divine displeasure by their prayers. (*Deut.* i. 27—31.)

V. 6. *Rent their clothes*, &c.] This was a common expression of intense grief, or deep abhorrence: (*Josh.* vii. 6. 2 *Sam.* iii. 31. 2 *Kings* xviii. 37. xix. 1. *Matth.* xxvi. 65.)

V. 9. *Bread for us*, &c.] Caleb and Joshua meant, that all the wealth and prosperity of the Canaanites would afford Israel the more suitable present support, and future accommodation: for as the measure of their iniquities was now filled up and the protection of God's providence was removed from them, and as the Lord had engaged to fight for Israel; the victory must be certain, easy, and cheap, more like taking possession of an estate, than conflicting with a powerful enemy.

V. 10. *All the*, &c.] Perhaps the rulers of the tribes and families first gave the word, and it soon became the general

11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they.

13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear *it*, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them,)

14 And they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land: *for* they have heard that thou, LORD, *art* among this people; that thou, LORD, art seen face to face; and *that* thy cloud standeth over them: and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 Now *if* thou shalt kill *all* this people as one man, then the nations, which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying,

16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

18 The LORD *is* long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the *guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth *generation*.

19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned, according to thy word:

21 But *as* truly *as* I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt,

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general outcry through the whole multitude, that they, who were nearest to them, should immediately stone them; that is not only Caleb and Joshua, but Moses and Aaron also, as it appears from the narration. And now dreadful deeds had been done, had not the Lord interposed to calm this tumult of the people, by a visible display of his glory which intimidated them for the present.

V. 11, 12.] This is the abrupt language of astonishment and indignation: the people had been tried and spared so long to no purpose, and still proceeded in their unbelief and provocations to such a degree, that it was in vain to bear with them any longer: (*Mark* ix. 19.) The Lord therefore declared *their deservings*, in this threatening to destroy them at once, and his faithfulness, in expressing his intention to fulfil his promises to the posterity of Moses, (*Ex.* xxxii. 10.)

V. 13—19.] In this supplication Moses did not in the least excuse the sin of Israel, object to the justice of the awful sentence, or argue that the immediate execution of it would not consist with the divine truth and goodness: but he pleaded *the appearance* which it would have, and the construction which the Egyptians and neighbouring nations would put upon it. They had witnessed or heard of the miracles which God had wrought for Israel, and the promises which he had made to them; and would never think of ascribing their destruction to the true cause, but would conclude that he was unable to fulfil his engagements. He therefore prayed that the Lord would shew his great power, not in their immediate destruction, but in sparing them and in performing his promises to them; (*Ezek.* xx. 14—22.) He further urged in his plea the name of the Lord, which had been proclaimed before him (Note, *Exod.* xxiv. 5—7.) and the examples of his former forgivenesses, from their leaving Egypt to the present time. Thus he argued that, consistently with his character, in his abundant mercies he could do it; and that former experience encouraged him still to expect it.

V. 18. *Will by no means clear*, &c.] As the word *guilty* is not in the original, many commentators put a different interpretation on this passage, both here and *Exodus* xxxiv. 7, than our translation doth; as if it only meant, that in executing judgment God would not proceed to extremities, but would soften the rigour of it with mercy. It doth not however appear, but that our translation is equally just: and the meaning of the passage thus translated is so important, so essential to the perfection of the divine character, so consistent with the general scope of Scripture, and so connected with the Lord's method of shewing mercy only to the penitent and believing, through the atonement of Christ; that there should be very cogent reasons to induce us to depart from it. (Notes, &c. *Nah.* i. 2—8.)—It comported very well with Moses' design to plead that the Lord could shew mercy in the largest measure, without acting inconsistently with his justice and holiness.

V. 21. *But as truly*, &c.] The Lord granted the prayer of Moses so far, as not immediately to destroy the whole congregation, as he declared himself otherwise prepared to do: but while he thus consented to glorify his power in shewing mercy, rather than in executing vengeance; he declared that he would spare them in such a manner, and attended with such circumstances of his indignation, as should make all ages and nations perceive the glory of his justice, and holiness, (18.)

V. 22. *These ten times*, &c.] The Israelites had many times put the Lord's power, faithfulness, and goodness to a needless trial; and even acted as if they would prove whether he could, or would, punish them for their crimes: a definite is put for an indefinite number, (*Gen.* xxxi. 41.)

V. 24.

Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, and have tempted me now theſe ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

23 Surely they ſhall not ſee the land which I ſware unto their fathers, neither ſhall any of them that provoked me, ſee it;

24 But my ſervant Caleb, becauſe he had another ſpirit with him, and hath followed me fully; him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his ſeed ſhall poſſeſs it.

25 (Now the Amalekites, and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderneſs, by the way of the Red ſea.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, ſaying,

27 How long *ſhall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur againſt me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, which they murmur againſt me.

28 Say unto them, *As truly as* I live, ſaith the LORD, as ye have ſpoken in my ears, ſo will I do to you:

29 Your carcaſes ſhall fall in this wilderneſs; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old, and upward, which have murmured againſt me,

30 Doubtleſs ye ſhall not come into the land *concerning* which I ſware to make you dwell therein, ſave Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun.

31 But your little ones, which ye ſaid ſhould be a prey, them will I bring in, and they ſhall know the land which ye have deſpiſed.

32 But *as for* you, your carcaſes they ſhall fall in this wilderneſs.

33 And your children ſhall wander in the wilderneſs forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcaſes be waſted in the wilderneſs.

34 After the number of the days in which ye ſearched the land, *even* forty days, (each day for a year,) ſhall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years; and ye ſhall know my breach of promiſe.

35 I the LORD have ſaid, I will ſurely do it

V. 24. *Had*, &c.] Caleb ſeems to have taken the more active part in this buſineſs: and as Joſhua was intended to be Moſes's ſucceſſor, the former is more frequently ſpoken of, though the latter was as evidently intended, and is alſo mentioned (30.) Caleb had *another ſpirit* with him, even the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of faith and holineſs; he therefore *followed* the Lord *fully*: that is, he ſimply believed the word of God, embraced his promiſes, obſerved his directions, obeyed his commandments, depended on his faithfulneſs, power, and goodneſs, and confidently expected that matters would eventually ſucceed exactly as he had ſpoken, notwithſtanding all difficulties, oppoſitions, or apparent improbabilities. This he did with perſeverance, patience, and courage; notwithſtanding influence, example, authority, terrors, and ſufferings, combined to divert him from his ſteady courſe: and he was willing to venture, endure, reject, or renounce whatever was neceſſary in ſo doing. In conſequence of thus fully following the Lord, he at firſt met with hatred, reproaches, threats, and dangers: but he ſurvived his enemies and their oppoſition, and at length had honour from God and man, much comfort, and a valuable recompence. (*Joſhua*, xiv. 6—14.) Such is the character, treatment, and cloſe of the true Chriſtian: whilſt the half-hearted profeſſor and the apoſtate eſcape the croſs, but loſe the crown. (*Matt.* vi. 24. x. 22. 37, 38. *Luke*, xiv. 26—33. *Rev.* ii. 10.)

V. 28, 29.] Thus the Lord ſware in his wrath, that "they ſhould not enter into his reſt," (*Pſ.* xcv. 11.) and irrevocably condemned all Iſrael to wander in the wilderneſs for the ſpace of forty years; till that generation was dead, and their children grown up to inherit the land, according to his promiſe to their fathers. Having ſworn by himſelf, and pledged the honour of all his perfections, the ſentence was made abſolute and irreverſible.—It is probable that the Levites, who were numbered from a month old, were not included: for it is evident, that Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron, aſſiſted Joſhua in dividing the land of Canaan after the conqueſt of it; (*Joſh.* xiv. 1.) though he was old enough to officiate in the prieſt's office before this time, (*Levit.* x. 6—16,) and was chief over the Levites, (*Num.* iii. 32.)

V. 32. *Shall know*, &c.] The children of the Iſraelites, by poſſeſſing Canaan, experimentally knew that it was a good land, though their fathers had deſpiſed it.

V. 34. *Forty years*, &c.] Forty years elapſed from the departure of Iſrael out of Egypt, to their entrance into Canaan.

My breach of promiſe, &c.] The original doth not convey the ſame preciſe idea to the mind, as this tranſlation. It may be rendered, *ye ſhall know my diſannulling*; which may either mean, that the people ſhould know whether the Lord, having uttered this ſentence againſt them, would diſannul it or not; that is, they ſhould experience the truth of it: or, they ſhould know, that whilſt his promiſes ſtand firm to the believing and obedient, hypocrites and apoſtates have no benefit from them: and whilſt *they* would interpret this excluſion into a *breach of promiſe*, *he* would ſhew, that it was only an interruption for wiſe and gracious purpoſes, and he would fulfil the promiſe to their deſcendents.

it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

36 And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him by bringing up a slander upon the land;

37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to search the land, lived *still*.

39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we *be here*, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do you transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.

42 Go not up, for the LORD *is* not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

43 For

V. 40—45.] The Israelites, having so frequently escaped with a more gentle rebuke, concluded, that the Lord would not proceed to extremities; and being convinced that they had sinned, by the death of the spies, they vainly hoped that an alteration of conduct would produce at least a mitigation of the sentence. But the irreversible oath was sworn, and they only added one rebellion to another, to their own destruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We shall not reap the benefit of the Scripture, unless we consider it as the history of human nature, written with an infallible and perfectly impartial pen; and are aware that we ourselves are disposed to act, in similar circumstances, exactly after the same manner as the Israelites did. If we are conscious of this, we shall see, in the chapter before us, a very humiliating picture of our own hearts and characters, which may be of great advantage to us. For we must perceive, that it is natural to sinful man to believe a lie in preference to the faithful word of God; which gives satan and his instruments their grand advantage in opposing true religion, and deceiving the souls of men. In this spirit of unbelief, we are prone to harbour hard thoughts of God, to rebel against him, to torment ourselves, and to rush headlong upon our own destruction: and we should be completely ruined, if our wishes were granted us, when discontent and unbelief influence our hearts: for we are capable of quarrelling even with our choicest mercies, and choosing, nay impatiently desiring those very evils, which at other times are most dreaded! But we should watch and pray against the very first beginnings of this ungrateful and abominable frame of mind; and keep a guard at the door of our lips, when these thoughts work in our hearts; for the Lord frequently takes such provoking rebels at their word, and sends them the judgment, or the death, for which they rashly wish.—The madness of a discontented heart is as manifest in its resolves, as in its desires. (*Eccles.* ix. 3.) Nor is there any thing so impracticable, or so desperate, which man dares not attempt, when raging in feeble rebellion against the will of God; as if he could overpower Omnipotence, and disannul the appointments of his Maker! Intreaties, counsels, encouragements, and warnings are all at such a time in vain, and only enrage the more: and thus Solomon's words are illustrated, "Let a "bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a "a fool in his folly." (*Prov.* xvii. 12.) How ought we then to watch our own hearts, lest this evil, which dwells within, should prevail, break forth, and produce such dire effects! But the grace of God's Spirit possessing the soul, produces a contrary disposition: the servants of the Lord will be inclined to stoop to venture, or to suffer any thing, in order to rescue infatuated sinners from impending ruin: and though they abhor their crimes, they will compassionate their persons, and both plead with them and pray for them, even when they see them full of enmity and rage against them. The Lord will afford peculiar protection, and singular marks of his regard, to those who venture to stem the torrent of prevailing iniquity, without being intimidated by the scorn and malice of their enemies, yet in a spirit of tender love to their persons: and the displays of his glory alone are sufficient to dismay the stoutest spirits of rebellious sinners, and to encourage the hearts of his servants in their extremest danger.—Though millions of the Lord's *professed* people perish in unbelief and disobedience, his covenant and promises stand sure: and whilst he glorifies his truth and mercy in his dealings with believers; he will take occasion from the perverseness of unbelievers more extensively and durably to glorify his whole name.—With the glory of God at heart, and the word of God dwelling within us, we cannot pray amiss, or plead in vain. Such intercessors are an invaluable blessing to any people, though seldom much esteemed, and often treated with the basest ingratitude: but, while they avert temporal judgments, and prevail for the conversion of many individuals; their prayers will not prevent the final destruction of obstinate and impenitent sinners.—In his hottest displeasure, the Lord knoweth how to distinguish betwixt the righteous and the wicked: and they, who manifest *another spirit*, than their unbelieving associates, and follow him fully, being valiant and patient in his cause, shall in due time have the distinguishing credit and comfort of their faithfulness. But dreadful is the case of those against whom the oath of God is gone forth; for as it is the *irreversible* security of the covenant of grace, for the "strong consolation of all, who have fled for refuge to lay "hold on the hope set before them;" so it seals irrevocably the doom of those who provoke him "to swear in his "wrath, that they shall never enter into his rest." And it

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.

44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill-top: nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, *even* unto Hormah.

CHAP. XV.

Contains laws, 1st For the meat and drink-offerings which accompanied the sacrifices, 1—16. 2d. For the heave-offering of the dough, 17—21. 3d. For sin offerings in case of ignorance, 22—29. 4th. Concerning presumptuous offenders, exemplified in the stoning of a sabbath-breaker, 30—36. 5th. For the wearing of fringes, 37—41.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you,

3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a free-will-offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd or of the flock;

4 Then

it is in vain to oppose the execution of the sentence, as the Lord can fence around the waste howling wilderness and convert it into a prison, in which effectually to confine the most outrageous rebels, who can by no efforts escape it. Though these truths are so plain and so important; yet sinners will not take warning, but persist in their rebellion, only varying the mode of it: and they are often blind enough to think that one act of disobedience may atone for another; an hypocritical uncommanded form of devotion, for gross prophaneness or injustice! But evil pursueth them; many plagues remain for all who go on still in their wickedness; and they may read their own condemnation, when the Lord's people separate from them and protest against them.—But in this history of those who were excluded from Canaan, let us advert to a case of greater and more universal importance. (*Ps.* xcv. 5—11. *Heb.* iii. 7—19. iv. 1—10.) A heavenly rest is revealed, proposed, and recommended to us in the sacred Scriptures. The true ministers of Christ describe it, as an exceedingly "good land; flowing with richer blessings than milk and "honey; and freely given to all, in whom the Lord delighteth:" and the very proposal of such a blessing to us by his gospel is a token for good. They point out the way in which sinners must come, and the means they must use if they would enter this good land; they assure them in the name of the Lord, that notwithstanding all their guilt, depravity, and weakness; notwithstanding the power, malice, and number of their enemies, the Lord will bring them into it, and give it them, if they rebel not against him, by despising and neglecting so great salvation; that they need fear no opposition; for that even conflicts, temptations, and persecutions will eventually do them good. (*Rom.* viii. 31—39.) They exhort them to day to hearken to the voice of the Lord, and warn them not to harden their hearts, and provoke him by delay: and admonish them to "take "heed that there be not in them an evil heart of unbe-"lief, in departing from the living God." In such addresses and exhortations, and in fervent prayers for them, they must, and will, and do, persist with unceasing importunity, in the face of hatred, contempt, and persecution, whilst hope is left. But alas! most men "despise the "pleasant land, and believe not the word;" (*Psalm* cvi. 24, 25;) they place no dependence on his promises; are discouraged by the prospect of real or imaginary difficulties and dangers; do not think even heaven worth so much trouble and self-denial; prefer a portion in this world; and harden their hearts, till it be too late, till their exclusion be irreversibly determined, and then they unavailingly regret their folly. (*Notes*, &c. *Prov.* i. 24—32. *Matt.* xxv. 1—13. *Luke*, xiii. 24—28.) Alas! too many, who appear to set out, through unbelief grow weary, and in their hearts, perhaps in their conduct, return back to the world: and many, who *profess to be spies*, and to have searched out the good land, bring an evil report upon it; and either by their doctrine, or by their evident attachment to temporal interests, and carelessness about spiritual things, weaken the hands of believers, and strengthen those of unbelievers. These being ringleaders in wickedness, will have the first share, or the last portion, of divine vengeance.—"Let us then fear, lest a promise being left us of enter-"ing into the Lord's rest, any of us should seem to come "short of it:" let us take warning from the fate of Israel, lest we perish after the same example of unbelief: let us be afraid of nothing, but of "provoking the Lord to sware "in his wrath, that we shall never enter into his rest;" let us go forth depending on his mercy, power, promise, and truth; let us follow him fully, venture for him freely, and suffer for him patiently; and he will assuredly be with us, and bring our souls to everlasting rest in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2. *When ye be come, &c.*] Though that generation was doomed to fall in the wilderness, and the whole congregation to wander in it forty years; during which space many new provocations and judgments were likely to intervene, all which seemed to threaten the final exclusion of Israel from Canaan: yet, as the Lord actually intended in due time to put them into possession of it, he enacted these laws as a pledge and assurance of his purpose, and as a token of his being *thus far* reconciled to them.—In the wilderness, whilst they had neither corn-fields, vineyards, nor olive-yards, but lived upon manna, they could not easily bring meat- and drink-offerings; so that they seem not to have been then required; and indeed it

4 Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD, bring a meat-offering of a tenth-deal of flour, mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of oil.

5 And the fourth *part* of an hin of wine for a drink-offering shalt thou prepare, with the burnt-offering or sacrifice, for one lamb.

6 Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare *for* a meat-offering two tenth-deals of flour, mingled with the third *part* of an hin of oil.

7 And for a drink-offering thou shalt offer the third *part* of an hin of wine, *for* a sweet savour unto the LORD.

8 And when thou preparest a bullock *for* a burnt-offering, or *for* a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto the LORD:

9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three tenth-deals of flour, mingled with half an hin of oil.

10 And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine, *for* an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

11 Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.

12 According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one, according to their number.

13 All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

14 And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever *be* among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do.

15 One ordinance *shall be both* for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth *with you*, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye *are*, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.

16 One law, and one manner, shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

18 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you,

19 Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave-offering unto the LORD.

20 Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough *for* an heave-offering: as *ye do* the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye heave it.

21 Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave-offering in your generations.

22 And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses,

23 *Even* all that the LORD hath commanded you

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is probable that a great part of their instituted worship was dispensed with.—The meat-offerings before prescribed were offered *separately*, but those, which are here appointed, accompanied all the sacrifices of animals, except of doves. Probably they were disposed of according to the method before appointed, and had the same significancy. (*Notes*, &c. *Lev.* ii.) A portion was burnt on the altar, and the remainder was eaten by the priests: and the drink-offering was disposed of in a similar manner. The sacrifices not only typified Christ, and all that fulness of spiritual blessings which is in him for our use, and those things which are well pleasing and honourable to the Father; but they likewise shadowed forth the pleasure which a reconciled God takes in the services of his redeemed people, and the delight which they take in communion with him. This is represented under the notion of their feasting together; and therefore all those things were directed to be brought, which were of general use at feasts; and in proper proportions, according to the kind or number of their sacrifices.

V. 4. *A tenth deal*, &c.] A tenth-deal was the same as an *omer*, or about five pints: a hin is computed by some to have been twice as much; others suppose that it contained rather less than two omers.

V. 16. *The stranger*, &c.] This law was intended to induce strangers to attend to the worship and ordinances of God; to intimate to the Israelites that if they were profligate and ungodly, they would be treated as strangers; and to teach them that in due time the Gentiles would be fully admitted into the church. It seems, that, though uncircumcised persons might not eat the Passover, they might offer other sacrifices in the appointed way, if they were so disposed.

V. 17—21.] *Notes*, &c. *Lev.* xxiii. 15—17.) The oblation prescribed in the passage referred to, seems to have been a general acknowledgment from the people at large: this here appointed was an oblation from every one that reaped a harvest; who was required, previously to tasting it himself, to offer a portion of dough, as a heave-offering to the Lord; which is supposed to have been given to the priests in their several cities, and not carried to the tabernacle. (*Ezek.* xliv. 30.)

V. 22—29.] This law concerning sins of ignorance, being diverse from one before considered, occasions some difficulty. But probably *that* was intended for those sins of ignorance which violated the precepts of the moral law;

you by the hand of Moſes, from the day that the LORD commanded *Moſes*, and henceforward among your generations;

24 Then it ſhall be, if *ought* be committed by ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation ſhall offer one young bullock for a burnt-offering, for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD, with his meat-offering, and his drink-offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a ſin-offering.

25 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and it ſhall be forgiven them; for it *is* ignorance: and they ſhall bring their offering, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their ſin-offering before the LORD, for their ignorance.

26 And it ſhall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and the ſtranger that ſojourneth among them; ſeeing all the people *were* in ignorance.

27 And if any ſoul ſin through ignorance, then he ſhall bring a ſhe-goat of the firſt year for a ſin-offering.

28 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly, when he ſinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it ſhall be forgiven him.

29 Ye ſhall have one law for him that ſinneth through ignorance, *both for* him that is born amongſt the children of Iſrael, and for the ſtranger that ſojourneth among them.

30 But the ſoul that doeth *ought* preſumptuouſly (*whether he be* born in the land, or a ſtranger,) the ſame reproacheth the LORD; and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people.

31 Becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that ſoul ſhall utterly be cut off; his iniquity *ſhall be* upon him.

32 And while the children of Iſrael were in the wilderneſs, they found a man that gathered ſticks upon the ſabbath-day.

33 And they that found him gathering ſticks brought him unto Moſes and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34 And they put him in ward, becauſe it was not declared what ſhould be done to him.

35 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, The man ſhall be ſurely put to death: all the congregation ſhall ſtone him with ſtones without the camp.

36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and ſtoned him with ſtones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

37 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

38 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue.

39 And it ſhall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them;

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law: *this* for thoſe errors, which took place in regard to ceremonial inſtitutions. However, though the law be different; the inſtruction contained in it is the ſame; (*Notes*, &c. *Lev.* iv.)

V. 30, 31.] *To do ought preſumptuouſly* is contraſted with *ſins of ignorance*: and it implies the tranſgreſſion of a known divine commandment, wilfully, deliberately, in contempt of the authority of God's word, in defiance of his juſtice, with an high hand, and in direct rebellion. Such a conduct "reproacheth the Lord," as if his commands were needleſs, unreaſonable, and inimical to man's happineſs; his authority only fit to be trampled under foot; his favour not deſirable, or his wrath not to be feared: in ſhort, as if it were more advantageous to rebel againſt him, than to ſerve him; (*Malachi*, iii, 13—15.) Many crimes will be found to be ſins of preſumption, which did not appear ſuch to the offender, at the time when he committed them; and this preſumption is not leſs heinous, when it does not ſpring, either from direct infidelity, or open profaneneſs; but is the effect of vain confidence in God, ſupported by an hopocritical profeſſion of religion, or an abuſe of the doctrine of Grace. (*Notes*, &c. *Rom.* vi. 1, 2. *Heb.* x. 26—31. 2 *Sam.* xii, 9, 10.) Whenever we ſet our own inclinations in oppoſition to the *known* command of God; and when God ſaith, "Thou ſhalt not," our conduct replies, 'But I will;' we are guilty of ſuch ſins of preſumption: eſpecially, if we are emboldened by a perſuaſion that God is ſo merciful, or has ſuch a ſpecial favour for us, that he will not puniſh us, and though the matter be in itſelf trivial, yet the daring rebellion is exceedingly atrocious; (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22, 23.) For ſuch an offender no ſacrifice was offered: he was doomed to bear his own iniquity; and to be utterly cut off, in ſome caſes, by a public execution, in others by the immediate judgment of God, (*Acts*, xiii. 39.)

V. 32—36.] This example is introduced to illuſtrate the foregoing law. A certain perſon was obſerved gathering ſticks on the ſabbath-day *in contempt of the commandment*, and was condemned as a preſumptuous offender to be ſtoned, for a warning to the reſt.

V. 38—40.] This diſtinction in the garments of the Iſraelites was a continual profeſſion of their religion, and a con-

them; and that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring;

40 That ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

41 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. A circumstantial account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, 1—19. 2d. The destruction of the congregation averted by the intercession of Moses and Aaron; and sentence denounced and executed upon the rebels, 20—35. 3d. Orders given for the disposal of their censers, 36—40. 4th. The rebellion renewed; a plague breaking out, but stopped by Aaron burning incense; with the number of those who perished, 41—50.

NOW Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men;*

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto

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a constant memorial to them to act consistently with it, in all places, companies, and transactions; preferring God's commandments to their own wayward inclinations, to gratify which they had shewn themselves so *idolatrously* prone: (*Note, Exod.* xx. 3:) and it would be a constant reproach to them, when they committed any kind of wickedness. Christ was obedient to this law: that, which is translated the *hem* or *border*, means the *fringe*, of his garment; and the Pharisees ostentatiously enlarged their *fringes*.—It is remarkable that the modern Jews generally neglect this precept, which they might obey; whilst they tenaciously adhere to their religion, though in most things it is become absolutely impracticable.—Some have argued that it would prevent much wickedness among the clergy, if they were always obliged to appear in their peculiar habits: but wretchedly abandoned must be that minister of religion, who needs such a restraint from open wickedness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1 The law written in our hearts, and obeyed in our conduct, forms the best evidence of pardoned sin.—We should study to proportion our obedience to the several commands of God, in such a manner as may best conduce to his glory, and be useful to those around us: and if repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, produce godliness, righteousness, love, and temperance, harmonizing in our daily walk, we shall attain that end.—When our chief delight is in the ordinances of God, and in communion with him, we find access to him and acceptance with him: and gratitude, connected with beneficence and temperance, confers the comfortable enjoyment of temporal blessings.—We fallen creatures are always violating one or other of God's commandments, even when we are most circumspect: and those slips which we are apt to account small, and which spring from ignorance or inadvertency, are not pardonable but through the atoning blood of Christ.—But let presumptuous sinners tremble: for though that great sacrifice is available for all who humbly repent and depend upon it; it enhances the guilt of those, who contemptuously reject it, or hypocritically profess a dependence upon it, while they allow themselves in known iniquity.—They who, in bold contempt of God's authority, violate the holy rest of the sabbath-day, should tremble while they read this chapter: for though they at present escape punishment; yet, unless they repent, the Lord will at length "utterly cut off their souls," and leave them for ever "with their iniquity upon them:" and it must be far worse with us as a nation, than it was with Israel when they provoked God in the desert; for they generally regarded the sabbath, we almost universally break it!—As we sinners of the Gentiles are now fully admitted to share the benefit of the Saviour's atoning blood, we should be abundant in our spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; we should boldly profess our faith in the sight of the world, and circumspectly walk according to it. We should use every means of refreshing our memories with the recollection of the truths and precepts of God's word; of animating and quickening our obedience; and of arming our minds against temptation. We should learn to mortify all our sinful inclinations: that we may not think our own thoughts, speak our own words, or find our own pleasure; but that we may seek the Lord's glory, and do his commandments, as his redeemed and holy people.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1, 2.] We are not informed of the date of this rebellion: but it seems to have taken place soon after the congregation was sentenced to wander in the wilderness. The giving of laws, and the breaking out of rebellions succeed each other after a very remarkable manner in this history: for sin by the commandment takes occasion to shew itself, and it's exceeding sinfulness.—Korah was a near relation of Moses and Aaron; (*Exod.* vi. 18;) and being discontented, as an ordinary Levite subject to the priests, he became a competitor for the priesthood. Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Reuben, Jacob's first-born, aspired at the supreme authority, probably being displeased with the pre-eminence of the tribe of Judah, as well as at the authority exercised by Moses.—On is only once mentioned; either he repented, or was of small note in the transaction. The former rebellions had been popular tumults: but this was a regular conspiracy, headed by persons of consequence, abetted by many of the chief princes, and favoured by the congregation in general.

V. 3. *Ye take*, &c.] Korah and his associates by this language

unto them, *Ye take* too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

4 And when Moses heard *it*, he fell upon his face:

5 And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the LORD will shew who *are* his, and *who is* holy; and will cause *him* to come near unto him: even *him* whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

6 This do: Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;

7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to-morrow: and it shall be, *that* the man whom the LORD doth choose, he *shall be* holy: *ye take* too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi;

9 *Seemeth it but* a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

10 And he hath brought thee near *to him*, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

11 For which cause, *both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what *is* Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; which said, We will not come up.

13 *Is it* a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

14 Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow:

17 And take every man his censer, and put

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language intimated, that the civil government and priesthood had been *usurped* by Moses and Aaron, without any commandment from God. They would allow that the Lord was among them, and had shewn them special regard; provided they might serve their own purposes by this concession; and, by determining that all the people were alike holy, might overturn the whole system, civil and religious, which the Lord had established among them. (*Heb.* vii. 12.)—The two hundred and fifty princes, who joined in this rebellion, and perished in the presumptuous attempt to burn incense, do not appear to have been exclusively Levites, but heads of the families in the several tribes; who, under the idea that the people were all holy, thought they had as good a right to officiate in the priests' office, as Aaron and his sons.

V. 5—7.] Moses was divinely directed to challenge those, who aimed at the priesthood, to refer the matter in this way to the Lord's decision, if, after the fate of Nadab and Abihu, they would venture so perilous an appeal: and it was appointed for the morrow, that they might consider, and deliberate, and so be induced to decline the presumptuous attempt.

V. 11. *For which cause*, &c.] Korah charged Aaron and his sons with exercising an usurped authority in an improper manner: but he really meant, by the assistance of the Levites and people, to exclude them, and to seize upon the honour and emolument of the priesthood for himself and his family. So that whilst they all pretended to rise up against Aaron, they were in fact gathering together in rebellion against the Lord.

V. 12. *Sent to call*, &c.] Moses, as the ruler whom God had placed over Israel, summoned Dathan and Abiram to appear before him to give an account of their conduct, and to inform him of the cause of this insurrection: but they, aspiring to the government, would not own his authority, and insolently refused to appear before him.

V. 14. *Wilt thou*, &c.] The conspirators accused Moses of endeavouring to impose upon the people, by pretences of acting by divine authority, and for their advantage; whilst he was sacrificing all their interests to the establishment of an usurped authority over them. As the cloke of religion did not subserve the purposes of those who aspired to the civil government, they never mentioned the Lord at all; but ascribed all to Moses, as if they had not witnessed any miracles or divine interpositions in the whole transaction.

V. 15. *Respect not thou*, &c.] That is, the offering of incense by Korah and his company, and by those who were confederates with them: (*Gen.* iv. 5. *Jude*, 11.)

V. 19.

put incenſe in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his cenſer, two hundred and fifty cenſers, thou alſo, and Aaron, each *of you* his cenſer.

18 And they took every man his cenſer, and put fire in them, and laid incenſe thereon, and ſtood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moſes and Aaron.

19 And Korah gathered all the congregation againſt them, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

20 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

21 Separate yourſelves from among this congregation, that I may conſume them in a moment.

22 And they fell upon their faces, and ſaid, O God, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, ſhall one man ſin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

23 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

24 Speak unto the congregation, ſaying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

25 And Moſes roſe up, and went unto Dathan and Abiram: and the elders of Iſrael followed him.

26 And he ſpake unto the congregation, ſaying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of theſe wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, leſt ye be conſumed in all their ſins.

27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every ſide: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and ſtood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their ſons, and their little children.

28 And Moſes ſaid, Hereby ye ſhall know that the LORD hath ſent me to do all theſe works; for *I have* not *done them* of mine own mind.

29 If theſe men die the common death of all men, or if they be viſited after the viſitation of all men; *then* the LORD hath not ſent me:

30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and ſwallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye ſhall underſtand that theſe men have provoked the LORD.

31 And it came to paſs, as he had made an end of ſpeaking all theſe words, that the ground clave aſunder that *was* under them:

32 And the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed them up, and their houſes, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods.

33 They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth cloſed upon them: and they periſhed from among the congregation.

34 And all Iſrael that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them: for they ſaid, Leſt the earth ſwallow us up *alſo*.

35 And

V. 19. *Korah gathered*, &c.] Whilſt the Levites, and others of their party, were preſumptuouſly burning incenſe, and waiting the Lord's deciſion; Korah himſelf ſeems to have been employed with vaſt ſucceſs in inſtigating the whole congregation to rebellion: thus he gathered them together to witneſs the event of the conteſt, and probably to ſeize by force the diſputed prize, perhaps with the ſlaughter of all who attempted oppoſition; had not the appearance of the divine glory overawed and intimidated them.

V. 22. *The God of*, &c.] Man is a ſpirit embodied in fleſh, the creature and ſubject of God. This relation of God to the ſpirits of mortal man ſeems to be here pleaded as a reaſon why he ſhould not indiſcriminately deſtroy the whole congregation; for he was acquainted with the inmoſt ſpirits of men, and could not be impoſed upon, but could diſtinguiſh both the innocent from the guilty, and the tempters from the tempted: and Moſes charitably hoped that only Korah ſinned preſumptuouſly, and that the reſt were miſled and ſinned ignorantly: (*Notes*, &c. xv. 27—31. *Luke*, xxiii. 34. 1 *Tim.* i. 13.)

V. 24. *Get you up*, &c.] The Lord allowed of the plea of Moſes; and they, who teſtified their repentance by ſeparating from the ringleaders of the rebellion, were exempted from *their* puniſhment: thus the congregation eſcaped, though many rebels periſhed in their preſumption.

V. 26. *Touch*, &c.] The rebels and all belonging to them were, as an accurſed thing, devoted to utter deſtruction; (*Lev.* xxvii. 29.) the people were therefore forbidden to touch any thing belonging to them; that they might enter a ſolemn proteſt againſt their wickedneſs, acknowledge the juſtice of their puniſhment, and expreſs the fear of being involved in it; (*Matt.* xi. 14. *Acts*, xiii. 51.)

V. 27. *The tabernacle of Korah*, &c.] Though the inſurgents were of different tribes, they ſeem to have quitted their proper ſituations in the camp, and to have pitched their tents cloſe together. Probably Korah was ſwallowed up with the

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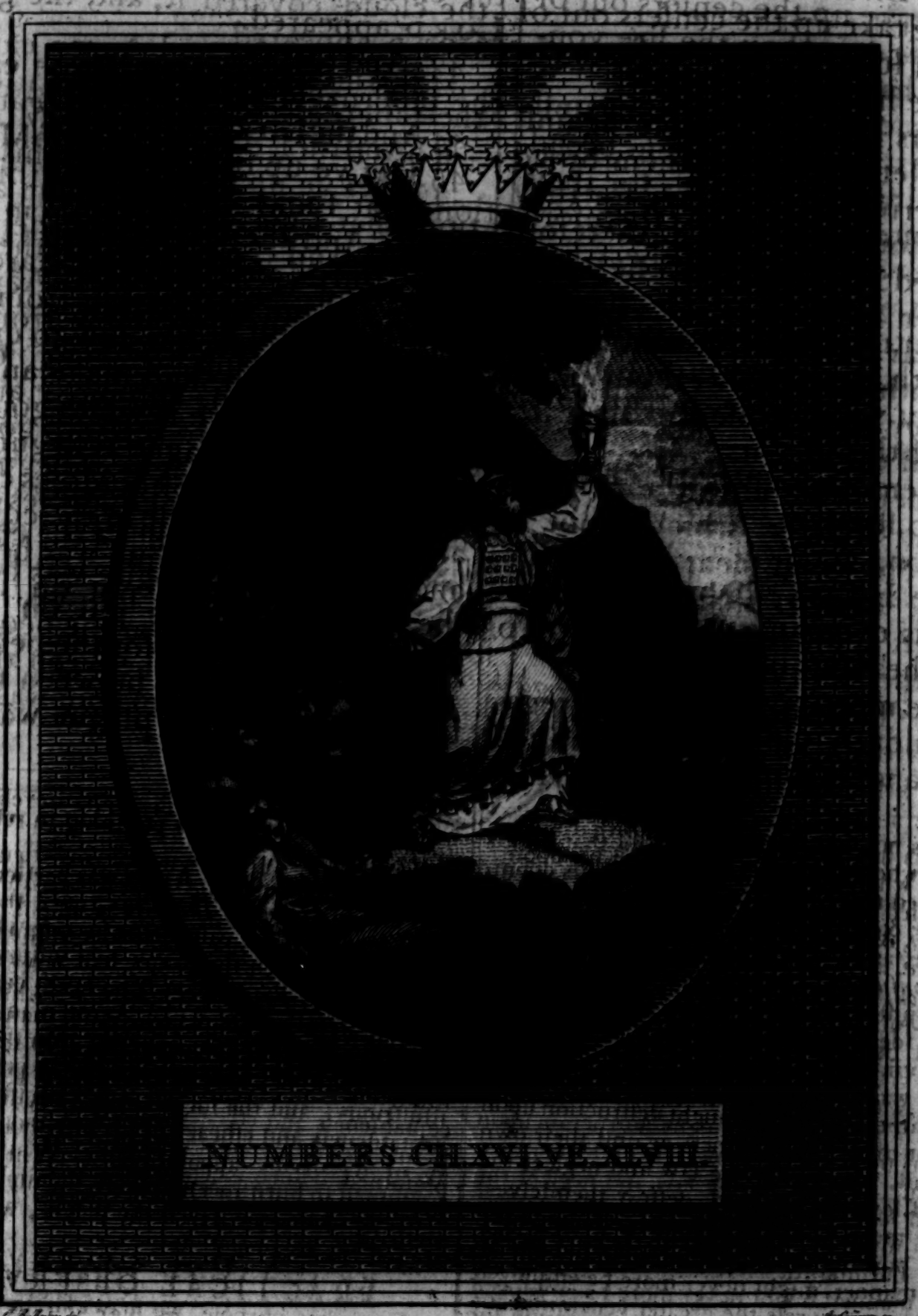
Engraved for the Rev.ᵈ M. Scott's Family Bible.



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35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

36 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

37 Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed.

38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates *for* a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.

39 And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad *plates for* a covering of the altar:

40 *To be* a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which *is* not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he be not as Korah and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

46 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

49 Now

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the rest, though he is not here mentioned; and that all his family and relations who were in the tent shared his doom, (32;) for his sons died not. (xxvi. 10, 11.)

V. 35. *Consumed, &c.*] It seems these rebels were not only *slain* by the fire, as Nadab and Abihu had been: but they were *entirely consumed*; being themselves made awful sacrifices to the justice of God, whose priesthood and sacrifices they had despised. (*Lev.* ix. 24. 1 *Kings*, xviii. 38. 2 *Chron.* vii. 1.)

V. 37—40.] It was the intent of these insurgents to injure Moses and Aaron; but they brought destruction upon themselves: so that they "were sinners against their own "souls." Thus all, who break the law and neglect the gospel, choose and love death, and destroy themselves, though they do not mean so.—These censers, having been once employed in burning the sacred incense, though in an uncommanded manner, might never more be employed to ordinary uses: but to impress the greater veneration for that typical institution, they were consecrated to the Lord, in such a manner, as to remain a constant and useful memorial to the people, who brought the sacrifices, and to the Levites who assisted in offering them.—It was an awful employment for Eleazar, to gather the censers from the remains of that dreadful conflagration!

V. 41. *Ye have killed, &c.*] The Israelites most absurdly imputed the opening of the earth, and the consuming fire, to Moses and Aaron, as if they had caused them; and called the persons, thus perishing in rebellion, *the people of the Lord!*

V. 46. *Altar, &c.*] Aaron was particularly reminded to take the fire *from off the altar*, notwithstanding the haste and urgency of the case; that he might honour the typical institutions which the people had vilified.

V. 48. *He stood, &c.*] The faith, courage, and love to his ungrateful people, which Aaron manifested, in *running*, without regarding consequences, into the midst of this enraged multitude, and this devouring pestilence, were very illustrious: and the success was a decisive proof of the acceptableness and efficacy of his priesthood, and consequently of its divine appointment. Whilst the others, who presumed to burn incense, were themselves consumed; his burning of incense stayed the plague, which had so rapidly wasted the congregation!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

For what purpose, we may enquire, were these things permitted and recorded?—The house of Israel was "planted a noble vine, wholly a right seed;" (*Jer.* ii. 21) and we cannot suppose that they were of a more perverse and wicked disposition than other people.—But we have in their history an unflattering picture of human nature, a thorough dissection of the human heart. Were any other people circumstanced, proved, and left to themselves, as they were; and were their history written with as com-

49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

50 And Aaron returned unto Moses, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

CHAP.

plete information and as impartial a pen, they would appear at least as black as Israel. Nay, the secret history of every individual, who lives and dies in sin, when it shall be published at the day of judgment, will be found just such another compound of infidelity, ingratitude, rebellion, and absurdity: Indeed these things were written, and this trial was made of human nature, in order to expose the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart of man, that we might, as in a glass, see the reflection of our own character; be led to examine and watch our own thoughts, affections, and conduct; be brought to judge and condemn ourselves, and become sensible of our need of pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. Instead therefore of expressing our surprise and indignation at these ancient rebels, let us look to ourselves; and we shall soon become sensible that "the spirit which is in us lusteth to envy," to pride, ambition, and covetousness. These restless passions are continually called forth into exercise on one occasion or other: and whatever advantages men enjoy by their rank in life, or station in the church of God; though they be wealthy, famous in the congregation, and men of renown: yet so long as God withholds any imagined blessing, or advances any one above them, they will experience insatiable cravings, which can only be increased by indulgence. —Except these lusts are subdued by the grace of God, suitable occasions will induce them to despise the dominion God hath placed over them, (*Jude*, 8;) to treat every exercise of authority as usurpation and oppression; to aspire at a lawless independency; or to seize upon the authority for themselves, and to account all their mercies but a small thing.—Nor can any wisdom, equity, or excellency, in superiors, or competitors, abate their envy, and enmity; or stop their mouths from slanderous accusations. This ungrateful and injurious conduct, towards man, will be accompanied with infidel forgetfulness of God and daring rebellion against him; which no evidences, no judgments, no warnings, no mercies can repress; or if they give it's malignity a temporary check, it is capable afterwards of breaking out more desperately. If it should be thought more to the purpose, they are capable of cloaking their ambition and selfishness under a pretence to godliness, and an hypocritical profession of being the Lord's holy people. For though no miracles can induce man to believe those doctrines, which interfere with their favourite pursuits and indulged lusts: yet they will readily allow the truth of Christianity, if they can render it subservient to their avarice, malice, or ambition.—Such is human nature! Such are our hearts. Such they would appear to be if fully proved: Such they have in a measure appeared already, when put to the trial. And comparing God's kindness to us, with our conduct towards him, during our past lives, we may each of us exclaim "It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed," as Korah and his company were!—One dreadful effect of this depravity is the daring presumption, with which numbers intrude into the sacred ministry, out of the vile motives of covetousness, ambition, love of ease, and desire of worldly indulgence or splendour, without any suitable dispositions, without any love for the work, zeal for the honour of God, or deep compassion for the souls of perishing sinners. Yet will such men dare to say in the most solemn manner, before God and his congregation, 'that they judge themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to 'take this office upon them;' though they are not only conscious of hypocrisy in the declaration, but deride the very enquiry as enthusiastic! and the whole transaction is frequently marked with similar dissimulation and iniquity! Of such conduct the author hath been guilty: and to the end of his days he would be abased before God on account of it, and admire and adore the patience and loving kindness of the Lord, that, instead of being visited after the manner of Korah, it hath pleased God to give him repentance and forgiveness of this aggravated wickedness; and to employ him in the work of the ministry, with some degree of usefulness! "for where sin hath abounded, grace "hath much more abounded." And he mentions this humiliating subject, not only that the pious reader may bless God in his behalf; but that he may hope and pray for others wholly under the same guilt, that they may experience the same grace. "For our God hath mercy on whom "he will have mercy."—He will also, first or last, manifest "who are his," "whom he hath chosen," "and "who are holy:" for it is not enough that we have the Lord's word in our hand, or his name in our mouth, unless we really believe his truth, and keep his commandments. "Nor will doing the service of the sanctuary," and "standing before his congregation," though with acceptance and usefulness, prevent, (nay they will aggravate,) the doom of the hypocritical or rebellious: and woe be to them, who refuse to judge or condemn themselves, till the Judge detect and condemn their iniquity.—He is "the God of "the spirits of all flesh;" all creatures obey him, and frequently in this world he makes examples of the wicked to deter others from sin: but if in long-suffering he spare them here, and they still persist in rebellion; their doom will be more dreadful at last, they will be cast alive into the bottomless pit, and the fire of hell will continually torment, but will never consume, them.—Let sinners then take warning: let them separate from the wicked, and have no fellowship with their unfruitful works, but rather reprove and protest against them, if they would not be associated with them in their punishment.—And instead of disputing against the awful threatenings of God's word; let them flee to the greatest distance from the pit of destruction, lest it should swallow them up also.—The Lord knows how to distinguish betwixt the deluded and the presumptuous, the penitent and the impenitent; and to glorify his mercy towards the one, whilst he magnifies his justice upon the other, and records their doom for an useful lesson to succeeding generations.—Let us however turn from such awful and hateful objects, to contemplate, admire, and imitate the effects of divine grace in the conduct of Moses and Aaron, in their patience, fortitude, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, and unwearied labours and prayers for the welfare of their ungrateful brethren. May we thus hate

the

CHAP. XVII.

Contents, 1ſt. The rods of all the tribes laid up before the ark: and Aaron's rod budding, bloſſoming, and bearing almonds, 1—9. 2d. Aaron's rod laid up before the ark for a memorial, 10, 11. 3d. The terror and deſpondency of the people, 12, 13.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and take of every one of them a rod, according to the houſe of *their* fathers, of all their princes, according to the houſe of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.
3 And thou ſhalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod *ſhall be* for the head of the houſe of their fathers.
4 And thou ſhalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation, before the teſtimony, where I will meet with you.
5 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* the man's rod whom I ſhall chooſe ſhall bloſſom: and I will make to ceaſe from me the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, whereby they murmur againſt you.
6 And Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael: and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houſes, *even* twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods.
7 And Moſes laid up the rods before the LORD, in the tabernacle of witneſs.
8 And it came to paſs, that on the morrow Moſes went into the tabernacle of witneſs; and, behold, the rod of Aaron, for the houſe of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed bloſſoms, and yielded almonds.
9 And Moſes brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Iſrael: and they looked, and took every man his rod.
10 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Bring Aaron's rod again before the teſtimony, to be kept for a token againſt the rebels; and thou ſhalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.
11 And Moſes did *ſo*: as the LORD commanded him, ſo did he.
12 And the children of Iſrael ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, Behold, we die, we periſh, we all periſh.
13 Whoſoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD ſhall die: ſhall we be conſumed with dying?

CHAP.

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the teſtimony of our conſciences to our integrity and benevolence, whenever we are falſely accuſed: may we be thus angry without ſinning; and, thus able to "bleſs them "that curſe us," not being "overcome with evil, but "overcoming evil with good." Then will the Lord protect, vindicate, and honour us in due time, in the preſence of our oppoſers, and we ſhall be bleſſed ourſelves, and bleſſings to others.—But we may in all this look unto Jeſus, dying for us when enemies; praying for his crucifiers; haſtening between the dead and the living, with the incenſe of his meritorious interceſſion, to ſtay the plague which ſin had occaſioned, and by which multitudes have periſhed, and we and all muſt have periſhed, had he not thus interpoſed. Through him we are ſpared and live: may his love "conſtrain us to live no longer to ourſelves, "but to him who died for us, and roſe again."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 2—11.] The Lord himſelf was at length pleaſed to bring the point in conteſt, between Moſes and Aaron and their rebellious oppoſers, to a final deciſion, by a ſafe and ſignificant method. The prince of each tribe was commanded to bring his rod, the badge of his authority, unto Moſes; who wrote in their preſence, every man's name upon his rod, without doubt in ſome manner which rendered it certainly diſtinguiſhable from the reſt. On the rod for the tribe of Levi, Aaron's name was written, as the head of that tribe. Then Moſes carried the rods into the tabernacle, and laid them before the ark, *within the vail*, into which he ſeems to have been allowed continual acceſs; and there he left them all night. Probably all the rods were of almond trees: but the others continued dry ſticks; while Aaron's budded, bloſſomed, and yielded almonds, within the ſpace of one day and night.—In this ſtate Aaron's rod was laid up "for a token "againſt the rebels," and probably continued ſo to future ages. Thus the Lord quite took away the murmurings of the people on this account, ſo that we hear no more of them in all their hiſtory.

V. 12, 13.] The language of theſe verſes is exceedingly deſcriptive of a forced ſubmiſſion, attended with terror and deſpondency, and an inward revolting againſt an appointment which the people dared no longer oppoſe: and it ſignificantly expreſſes their character, and the greatneſs of the ferment which prevailed among them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

"The Lord hath no pleaſure in the death of the wick-"ed;" yet perdition is inſeparable from continuance in ſin: he therefore graciouſly removes the occaſions of offending, that men may be preſerved from condemnation. He will give all proper ſatisfaction to thoſe that are diſpoſed to be convinced, and will manifeſt the equity of his determinations to every impartial and humble enquirer.—Our

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. The work and charge of the priests, and the assistance which the Levites were to give them, 1—7. 2nd. The reserved perquisites of the priests' office, 8—19. 3d. The tithes assigned to the Levites, and the tithe of them to the priests, 20—32.

AND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou, and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee; but thou and thy sons with thee *shall minister* before the tabernacle of witness.

3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.

4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.

5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; to you *they are* given *as* a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priests' office, for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest' office, *unto you as* a service of gift; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them,

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Our Lord Jesus was most unanswerably demonstrated to be the "great High Priest over the house of God," when "the rod of his strength went forth out of Zion;" and multitudes were made willing in the day of his power, in the "beauties of holiness:" (*Psal.* cx. 2, 3;) and when, through him, "Israel shall blossom, and bud, and fill the "face of the world with fruit:" (*Isaiah*, xxvii. 6;) it will appear still more illustriously divine.—Those ministers, whom God chooses and sends, will not remain as dry rods before the Lord and his church; but more or less, sooner or later, they will bud, and blossom, and bear fruit; not only the fruits of holiness in their lives, but the fruits of usefulness in their ministery. May, when most opposed and persecuted, they may hope and pray for more evident fruitfulness, to encourage their hearts, to establish the Lord's people, and to silence and confound all their adversaries; and their usefulness will be "fruit which shall re-"main" before the Lord, to his everlasting glory, and their eternal recompence; and in the church for the good of many when they are fallen asleep. (*John*, xv. 16.)—But alas! when man's presumption is checked, and his self-sufficiency is abated, he *naturally* is prone to hard thoughts of God and unbelieving despondency; to neglect divine ordinances, lest he should be guilty of profaning them; to bury his talent in the earth, lest he should be condemned for wasting it; and to justify himself in neglecting good works, because he cannot merit heaven by them!—The Lord give us grace to avoid all extremes, into which an evil heart and a subtle enemy combine to betray us!

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *Shall bear*, &c.] Aaron and his family were now confirmed in the priesthood against all competitors; and the people were exceedingly terrified lest the tabernacle should occasion their destruction. To counterbalance the honour conferred upon the former, and to allay the terrors of the latter, it was declared that the priests must bear the blame of every thing which was not properly conducted, in respect of the tabernacle and it's service; and that the people had nothing to fear, *in this particular*, but a presumptuous intrusion into the places and services, from which they were by the law excluded. The priests ought therefore to be very circumspect, active, and exemplary, both in their ministrations and conversation, else they would soon be burdened with guilt, which their legal sacrifices could not expiate; (1 *Sam.* iii. 14.)

V. 2—7.] The Levites were not allowed, on pain of death, even to look upon the sacred furniture which they carried, or to approach it, till it had been covered by the priests. They were not admitted within the sanctuary; whither the priests alone entered, to burn incense on the golden altar, to order the lamps of the golden candlestick, and to place the loaves on the table of shew-bread, or to remove them. The Levites might assist in *preparing* the sacrifices, but not in *burning* them on the altar. (*Num.* &c. iv. viii. *Exod.* xxvii. 20, 21. xxx. 8. *Lev.* xxiv. 3—9.)—The priests therefore stood accountable for "every thing of the altar and within the vail;" and the Levites were required to be their servants, and to minister to them: Yet the former, must confider their work and charge as a *special gift* and favour from God; and not as a disagreeable appendage to the emoluments and splendour of their office.

V. 19.

them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever.

19 This shall be thine of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every oblation of their's, every meat-offering of their's, and every sin-offering of their's, and every trespass-offering of their's, which they shall render unto me, *shall be* most holy for thee, and for thy sons.

20 In the most holy *place* shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

21 And this *is* thine, the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

22 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.

23 *And* whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat *of* it.

24 Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

25 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless, the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

26 And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs.

27 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem, they *are* holy; thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat *for* an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

28 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave-breast and as the right shoulder are thine.

29 All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it *is* a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee, and to thy seed with thee.

30 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I *am* thy part, and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

31 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth of Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

32 Neither

V. 15—18.] *(Notes, &c. Lev.* xxvii. 3—13.)

V. 19. *A covenant of salt, &c.*] *(Note, Lev.* ii. 13.) The Lord established it, as a perpetual and stable covenant with the family of Aaron, and an unalterable statute to Israel, all the time that they possessed the land of Canaan, that the priests should have these perquisites for themselves and their families, not as merited by them, but by reason of their anointing to that sacred office.

V. 20. *No inheritance, &c.*] The priests and Levites possessed houses and lands for gardens, and pasturage in the suburbs of their cities; or they might purchase estates to the year of jubilee: but they had no portion allotted them in the division of the land of Canaan: for it was the Lord's will, that they should receive, and be maintained by, that portion, which he reserved to himself as a rent out of the estates of the other Israelites. By this appointment they were exempted from many avocations and snares, which the cultivation and improvement of lands would have occasioned; and were plentifully supplied with every thing needful and comfortable. At the same time their interests were placed in an inseparable connection with the maintenance of the worship of God; for if the people became generally irreligious, or idolatrous, they would neither bring sacrifices nor pay tithes. And indeed the nature of man in general; that dispensation in particular in the nonage of the church; and the entail of the priesthood and of the sacred ministry upon one family and tribe; would render it proper to employ every tye and motive, to engage them to support the worship of God to the utmost of their ability.

V. 21. *The tenth, &c.*] The Lord by this statute gave the Levites a tenth of the whole *increase* of the land, of the labour and improvements, as well as of the estates, of all the other tribes. This was a large proportion for the smallest tribe, and, when joined to all the rest assigned them, was a very plentiful provision. But the other tribes would have also the advantages accruing from trade and manufactures, in which the Levites were not intended to be occupied.—This tenth seems to have been the common stock of the tribe, and divided among them accordingly: and this would obviate that common evil effect of tithes; namely the contentions that these arise betwixt ministers

22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin and die.

23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity. *It shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer *as* an heave-offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the LORD, *even* a tenth *part* of the tithe.

27 And *this* your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you as though *it were* the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press.

28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave-offering unto the LORD of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave-offering to Aaron the priest.

29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, *even* the hallowed part thereof, out of it.

30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press.

31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it *is* your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.

32 And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

CHAP.

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and the people of their peculiar charge; for the tithes were not paid to an *individual*, but to a *collective* body.

V. 27. *As though*, &c.] The Levites received tithes of the people, of which they gave a tithe to the priests; and some have conjectured that the tenth of this tithe was allotted for the High-priest's support, according to the pre-eminence to which he was advanced. This tithe of the tithes was the Levites' oblation to the Lord, and as acceptable as that which was paid out of the estates of the other Israelites; for every one should in some way honour God with his substance.

V. 32. *Neither*, &c.] The Levites would *pollute the holy* things, if they used the tithes, without separating the portion assigned to the priests.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The office of a minister is "a good work," and an important charge; and to be employed and trusted in it, to be approved faithful and made useful, is the greatest honour and favour that God ever confers upon mortal man. But it is weighty and perilous; "the iniquity of the priest-"hood," and "of the sanctuary," form the most aggravated of all guilt, and will sink the mercenary, the careless, and the profligate minister into the deepest condemnation; besides occasioning wrath upon the people, and dragging them down with him into destruction. Ministers therefore ought to "rejoice with trembling;" to "take heed to "themselves, and to their doctrine;" to "avoid entangling "themselves in the affairs of this life;" to consider the Lord as their portion, the interests of godliness as their interests, and the glory of God in the salvation of souls as their grand, their sole object. They who desire this good work should look to it, that their motives, dispositions, and qualifications be such, as may give them a reasonable ground to hope, that they will "be approved of "God, workmen that need not be ashamed;" and that the maintenance which they receive, may be indeed "for their "service in the sanctuary."—On the other hand it is the Lord's pleasure, "that they who preach the gospel should "live of the gospel," and be preserved from the anxieties and temptations of pinching poverty; that they may have no occasion to entangle themselves in worldly business, nor inducement to flatter or to be silent out of pecuniary considerations. Nor is it only his will, that they should have enough to maintain their families, and punctually to discharge their debts; but that they should have a surplus for pious and charitable uses; and that they should thus employ it: not luxuriously spending, nor covetously hoarding it; but living themselves, and leaving their families to live, in dependence on God's providence. It is therefore criminal, not only to defraud, but to be niggardly to the ministers of God; and their maintenance must not be considered as an alms, or an imposition, but their just due; as God's portion out of men's estates; which being withheld will pollute the enjoyment of all the rest.—Whatsoever is offered to the Lord must be of the best; and they, who have the Lord for their inheritance, will be well provided for in this world and in the next, without the embarrassments and cares which perplex others.—Let us then endeavour to know, and do, our own work diligently, to be contented with and thankful for our daily bread; and as Christians indeed, to seek our inheritance and our treasure in

Contains, 1st. The law for preparing the water of purification, 1—10. 2d. The occasions upon which, and the manner in which, it was to be used, 11—22.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein *is* no blemish, *and* upon which never came yoke.

3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and *one* shall slay her before his face.

4 And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.

5 And *one* shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn.

6 And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast *it* into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even.

8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

9 And a man *that is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation: it *is* a purification for sin.

10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

14 This *is* the law when a man dieth in a tent; All that cometh into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

15 And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean.

16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead

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in heaven, to set our affections on things above, to have our conversation heavenly, to consider ourselves as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to leave the eager pursuit of earthly things to those who know no better possessions to be coveted or enjoyed!

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 2. *Red heifer*, &c.] The *red colour* of this heifer may lead us to think of him, who "was "red in his apparel," both as stained with his own blood shed for our sins, and with the blood of his enemies. Christ never bare the yoke of sin, nor would have been made subject to the yoke of the law, except for our sakes and as our Surety.

V. 3. *Eleazar*, &c.] The High-priest must not on any account knowingly contract defilement, therefore the next priest to him officiated in this ceremony, not only at this time, but probably on future occasions of the same nature. —Christ suffered without Jerusalem, by the hands of others, but under the inspection, and by the sentence, of the chief priests, who were all grievously polluted by that enormous wickedness, though his death was according to the purpose and determinate counsel of God. (*Acts* ii. 23.)

V. 4. *Directly before*, &c.] Either towards the tabernacle when without the camp; or after the solemnity was finished, in the court of the tabernacle.

V. 6. *And*, &c.] (*Note, Lev.* xiv. 4.)

V. 9. *Lay them up*, &c.] After the Israelites were settled in Canaan, it is very probable that these ashes were conveniently placed in every neighbourhood. As a small quantity would serve, they would last a long time, and would aptly typify the *abiding* efficacy of the death of Christ.

V. 11. *He that toucheth*, &c.] It doth not appear that the touch of an unclean person, or any other thing, required this burdensome purification, except that of a *dead human body*. It is observable that no object is so offensive to our senses, as an human body in a state of putrefaction: for death *in man alone* is the wages of sin; the execution of the sentence of God's law upon a condemned criminal. The hatefulness of sin is therefore strongly marked in the circum-

dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17 And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean.

21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes, and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

22 And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The death of Miriam, 1. 2d. The people murmuring for want of water; the misbehaviour of Moses and Aaron, and their consequent sentence of exclusion from Canaan: water notwithstanding brought forth from a rock, 2—13. 3d. The Edomites' refusal of a passage through their land, 14—21. 4th. The death of Aaron, and the succession of Eleazar, 22—29.

THEN came the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month: and the people abode

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circumstances of this purification: but through Christ the very nature of death is changed to the true believer; and both the defilement and the sting of it are removed.

V. 21. *Shall be unclean*, &c.] The Jews say, that "even Solomon could not understand the mystery, how the "same water should pollute the clean person, and cleanse "the polluted." But the defiling nature of sin, and the insufficiency of these ceremonial observances, except in their reference to Christ, are denoted: and the mystery is revealed to him who "beholds the Lamb of God that," alone, "taketh away the sin of the world."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those great pretenders to reason, who allow the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and will not say that God appoints any thing *unreasonable*, should consider what rational account can be given of these appointments, or what use can be made of them, if we do not refer them to those doctrines, which they object to, or perhaps deride.—But comparing them with the New Testament, and with the observable propensities of human nature, the propriety and instructive use of them become evident. Fallen man is actually sunk in many respects below the beasts that perish, and is in a most abject and debased condition, an object of the divine displeasure and abomination: yet he admires and flatters himself, loses sight of his filthiness, and accounts his very death as a matter of course, instead of an ignominious execution upon the body, and an introduction to a more dreadful condemnation and execution upon the immortal soul!—His true state was in these institutions presented before his eyes, and the humiliating consideration forced upon his attention. Here we learn the defiling nature of sin, which contaminates whatever it touches; and we are warned to avoid those "evil communications, "which corrupt good manners;" and not to associate with sinners, unless to benefit them, and then with great fear and care, lest instead of cleansing them we should be defiled by them. From the pollution of sin we must be cleansed, or we never can enter heaven; nor can it be removed, except in a method of God's own appointing. The atoning sacrifice of Christ is the only purchase of our purification, his Holy Spirit applying salvation to the soul is the only efficient cause; the living water and the ashes of the sacrifice, the pardoning efficacy and the sanctifying grace are never separated. By faith, like the bunch of hyssop, in the use of the instituted means, we are both justified and sanctified. (*Eph.* v. 25—28. *Titus*, ii. 14. 1 *Peter*, i. 2.) Thus the guilt and dominion of sin is removed, and its pollution by *repeated* applications gradually cleansed away, until at length its existence is finally destroyed. No degree of guilt or pollution can bar the salvation of that man who avails himself of this provision: but the least sin will for ever ruin such as presumptuously despise and neglect it. Though we cannot contrive, merit, or effect salvation for ourselves or others: yet we may use, or we may neglect, the means of application; and we may be instrumental either to the salvation or to the destruction of those connected with us. Even they, who are useful to their fellow sinners, must recollect continually that they also need cleansing; not only in respect to their other conduct, but even in respect to their most honest and strenuous endeavours to save the souls of their fellow sinners.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *In the first month*, &c.] For more than thirty-seven years Israel had now abode in the wilderness, confined as in a prison by the power of God; during all which

abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it *is* no place of seed, or of figs, or vines, or of pomegranates; neither *is* there any water to drink.

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly: and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

13 This *is* the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us:

15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and

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which time we scarcely learn any thing about them, but that the old generation had almost all died off, and a new generation was risen up in their stead.—In the first month in the fortieth year the history is resumed, and we find them at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, in the confines of Canaan, (not *Sin*, in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, *Exod.* xvi. 1;) where Miriam, who must have been at least one hundred and thirty years of age, died and was buried.

V. 2—6.] How long the water from the rock in Horeb followed the Israelites, or whence they had been supplied, we know not. But being at this time in want, the old effect was produced, though they were mainly a new generation: they murmured, desponded, and wished themselves dead, and quarrelled with Moses and Aaron, as their fathers had done.

V. 8. *Speak ye*, &c.] The waters from the rock in Horeb typified the sanctifying comforting influences of the Holy Ghost, communicated to God's people, through the death of Christ, when smitten for our sins: (*Notes*, &c. *Exod.* xvii:) and though this could not be the same rock, the typical meaning seems to have been carried on. The rock *once smitten* needs but be spoken to, by the prayer of faith accompanying the preached word, and the waters will flow forth. The pretended sacrifice of the mass seems to be an imitation of Moses's error, in repeatedly smiting the rock, which he ought only to have spoken unto.

V. 10—12.] Though the people were *rebels*, and Moses called them so at other times without offence, yet he evidently spake at this time in an angry spirit. He also assumed honour to himself and to Aaron, instead of giving glory to God, whilst he enquired, "must *we* fetch you "water out of this rock?" (*Gen.* xl. 8. xli. 16. *Dan.* ii. 28—30. *Acts*, iii. 12—16.) He seems to have questioned whether the water would be given, and not to have deemed it sufficient *to speak to the rock*; and therefore, in haste and in heat, he *twice smote it*: though the sign of *speaking to it* was probably intended as a rebuke to the people, who were not so obedient to the Lord's command as the very rocks were. In all this *we* can see much to blame, but the Lord saw much more, and that Aaron also was involved in the guilt: though the water therefore was not withheld, yet the relief to Israel was followed by a severe rebuke to Moses and Aaron, and a sentence of exclusion from Canaan.—They were eminent characters; the eyes of all Israel were upon them; and their improper conduct, and want of confidence in the power and faithfulness of God were very dishonourable to him.

V. 13. *Meribah*, &c.] The other place, where water had been brought out of the rock was called *Meribah*, but it was called also *Massah*; this was *Meribah-Kadesh*, (*Exod.* xvii. 7. *Deut.* xxxii. 51.)

V. 14—21.] The descendents of Esau, now grown into a flourishing kingdom, were not unacquainted with the relation in which the Israelites stood to them, nor with their bondage

and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers:

16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we *are* in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink *of* the water of the wells: we will go by the king's *high*-way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high-way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, (without *doing* any thing *else*,) go through on my feet.

20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

22 And the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor.

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.

27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and

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bondage in Egypt and deliverance from it, their continuance in the wilderness, and their pretensions to Canaan. With them Moses pleaded the brotherly relation to move natural affection; the past distresses of the people to excite compassion; and the favour of the Lord to them, who by the Angel of his presence guided and protected them, to influence their hopes and fears: he engaged that the people should pass through with all convenient speed, on the king's high way, doing no harm, and paying even for the water which they drank. But the Edomites suspected their intentions, retained their old enmity, denied their request, and threatened them with war. Yet the Israelites were not allowed to molest them, but were required to set an example of forbearance and forgiveness, by taking a long circuit round their country.

V. 28. And Aaron died, &c.] Though Aaron left the world under a divine rebuke, yet he died as a pardoned sinner, with the hope and earnest of glory, and the comfort of seeing his son invested with his priesthood. Doubtless the command given to Moses, and the service assigned him in this matter, must have awakened many painful feelings in his breast, when he considered his own perhaps deeper guilt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Well might Moses say, (*Psalm* xc. 9—12,) "All our "days are passed in thy wrath; we spend our years, as a "tale that is told:" when during so long a period he witnessed nothing worthy to be recorded, but the death of many hundreds of thousands of his brethren!—Even so this day man's life passes away in much the same manner: for what is it but a tedious repetition of the same dull occurrences, with evident proofs of our folly and guilt, and of the Lord's anger tempered with mercy, "till our life "be cut off, and we flee away!"—Thus the longest life soon comes to a close; and the only advantage that the most eminent possess above the more obscure is, that they do not die quite so unnoticed. O Lord, "So teach us to "number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto "wisdom!"—The propensity to do so is evidently not the fault of this or that man or people, but of human nature: therefore one generation after another manifests the same disposition to unbelief, impatience, and rebellious murmurs.—We can easily descant on the aggravations of Israel's crime, in this instance, after all they had witnessed and experienced: but had we been in their place, cooped up in the wilderness, confined mainly to one kind of food, at a distance from all the delicacies and varieties, with which even the poorest in a fertile land, are *comparatively* feasted, during the revolutions of the seasons and their several productions: should not we too have been fretful, and impatient? not that we should have had either right or reason to complain, but because we are proud and sensual, and consequently hard to please.—But why question whether we should have rebelled? when Moses and Aaron stand condemned with Israel, though not of the same, yet of similar, unbelief, rebellion, and anger. Even Moses the meekest man on earth spake unadvisedly with his lips; (*Psalm* cvi. 32, 33.) and we are constrained

and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the house of Israel.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Israel, 1st. Attacked by king Arad, and the utter destruction of him, his people, and cities, 1—3. *2d. Murmuring, punished by fiery serpents, repenting, and the brazen serpent erected for their relief,* 4—9. *3d. Marching forward, and directed to springs of water,* 10—20. *4th. Conquering Sihon and Og, with their kingdoms,* 21—35.

AND *when* king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took *some* of them prisoners.

2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

4 And they journeyed from mount Hor, by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

5 And

strained repeatedly to notice the most eminent saints defective in their most distinguishing excellences.—Under long continued trials, the best of men prove not only the reality of their grace, but also that "sin still dwelleth in "them;" nay old age gives advantage to some evils, and to none more than a peevish spirit.—In proportion to the eminence of a man's character, and the notoriety of his offence, it will dishonour and displease God: (*Eccles.* x. 1. *Matt.* v. 13—16;) and by putting us to shame for our sins, he will distrain for that honour which we have neglected to render him. Whilst impenitent sinners escape punishment in this world, being reserved unto the day of judgment; the Lord marks the offences of his people with alarming severity! yet still it is all in mercy, and notwithstanding our unworthiness he will provide for our wants, and answer our prayers, when we speak for a supply of the waters of life which flow from the rock of salvation.—Let us learn also to imitate the impartiality of the historian; and the silent submission of him and of Aaron, in acquiescing in this humbling public rebuke for a public offence; and the example of Israel to insolent and injurious Edom. Thus upright and inoffensive, thus candid in our declarations, and open in our profession of religion; thus fair in our proposals, slow to anger, ready to forgive, and to give up our convenience, and even to recede from our right, rather than contend about it, should we be: and when we cannot overcome evil with good, we should leave the Lord to plead our cause in his own time and manner.—When one affliction has not produced a proper effect, another may be expected; and the Lord's word will surely, perhaps speedily, be fulfilled in his providence. Shortly death will strip the richest, wisest, and most honourable of all their distinctions, except true grace has made them to differ; in that case, when they leave all the rest to others, that will be their own for ever. Having served their generation, they need not wish to survive their usefulness; nor can that correction be justly complained of, which hastens a man's entrance into heaven.—When eminently good men die, rivalships, envy, resentment, and prejudice, which often render them uneasy whilst they live, die also; and survivors very commonly honour and mourn for those whom when living they opposed and reviled! It is indeed a tribute due to them: but it matters not what others think and say of them, when dead, except they will then receive their testimony and follow their example.—Blessed be God, our High Priest at death relinquished not his priesthood to another, but rose again to complete his design, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. Having the fulness of the Spirit, he raises up a succession of ministers and Christians to preach and profess his truth, from age to age, and he hath consigned the robe of his righteousness to all his spiritual posterity, for their accepted appearance before God.—If we be his indeed, though we be separated from our dearest friends, and must shortly be absent from the body, yet we shall never be separated from him; "for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—3.] Before the people set out to march round the country of Edom, Arad, king of those Canaanites, who inhabited the southern part of the country, knowing their intentions of invading the land, and that the spies had formerly searched it out, and now learning that they approached his borders, attacked them in the wilderness, and took some of their prisoners, which elated him and discouraged them. But this disadvantage induced the Israelites to place a more entire dependence on the Lord; and to devote the cities and property of these assailants to utter destruction, in case they were victorious; their persons having been already thus devoted by God himself. In this confidence they waged war with them, and pushed forward to their cities, which they took and utterly destroyed; and called the name *Hormah*, or *utter destruction*, that none might ever after build on the same ground.

V. 4, 5.] The people were not permitted to force their way through the land of Edom, but were called back into the wilderness, as if about to return to the Red Sea. The road perhaps proved heavy or rough, water was scarce, and they grew weary of living so long on manna, which probably they fancied was not *hearty* enough to support them under

5 And the people ſpake againſt God, and againſt Moſes, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderneſs? for *there is* no bread, neither *is there any* water; and our ſoul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD ſent fiery ſerpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Iſrael died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moſes, and ſaid, We have ſinned; for we have ſpoken againſt the LORD, and againſt thee: pray unto the LORD that he take away the ſerpents from us. And Moſes prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Make thee a fiery ſerpent, and ſet it upon a pole: and it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, ſhall live.

9 And Moſes made a ſerpent of braſs, and put it upon a pole, and it came to paſs, that if a ſerpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the ſerpent of braſs, he lived.

10 And the children of Iſrael ſet forward, and pitched in Oboth.

11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the wilderneſs which *is* before Moab, toward the ſun-riſing.

12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared.

13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other ſide of Arnon, which *is* in the wilderneſs that cometh out of the coaſts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

14 Wherefore it is ſaid in the book of the wars

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under ſuch fatigues. On theſe accounts they were diſcouraged, and relapſed into their old ſin of diſtruſtful murmuring.

V. 6—9.] Theſe ſerpents abounded in the wilderneſs, (*Deut.* viii. 15,) but had been reſtrained from hurting the people, till they provoked God to give them a commiſſion to aſſail the camp; in which they ſoon did dreadful execution, and cauſed ſtill greater conſternation. They were called *fiery* ſerpents, as ſome think from their colour, which reſembled poliſhed braſs; others, with greater probability, deduce the epithet from the inflammation, like the burning of fire, which immediately followed their bite. The people being thus made ſenſible of their fault, and brought to confeſs it, intreated Moſes to pray for the removal of the ſerpents, which he readily did. The ſerpents however, were not removed: but Moſes was commanded to form one of braſs exactly like them, to affix it to a long pole, and to place it in a conſpicuous part of the camp. To this brazen ſerpent, thoſe who had been bitten were directed to look. Nothing could in itſelf be leſs ſuited to give relief than ſuch an expedient: but it was the Lord's appointment, his wiſdom muſt be ſubmitted to, and by this token the ſufferers muſt expreſs their dependence on him, and expectation of a cure from him alone. Accordingly whoſoever looked, however deſperate his caſe, or feeble his ſight, or diſtant his ſituation, was infallibly and perfectly cured: but if any one would ſhut his eyes, or turn his back of the brazen ſerpent, he muſt die.—This forms a very ſignificant type of our ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt: (*Notes, &c. John*, iii. 14, 15.) The Lord, provoked by man's firſt apoſtacy, hath been pleaſed to permit that old ſerpent, the tempter, the devil, to communicate his baleful venom to the whole human race, which operates to their deſtruction: and numbers in conſequence have periſhed, are periſhing, and will periſh. But, "God ſo loved "the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that who-"ſoever believeth in him ſhould not *periſh*, but have ever-"laſting life."—The Saviour was indeed perfectly free from ſin, but he bare the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*; he was numbered with malefactors, and crucified with them; and it is obſervable that the ſuppoſed crime for which he ſuffered, namely, *making himſelf equal with God*, was conſidered by his enemies as the eſſence of *diabolical* ambition, uſurpation, and blaſphemy. Having thus been made ſin for us, he is now held forth in the preached goſpel publicly to all nations; ſo that when any poor ſinner is made ſenſible of his guilt, miſery, and danger; when he humbles himſelf before God, and cries for mercy and deliverance; he is commanded to look unto Jeſus as dying upon the croſs for the tranſgreſſions "of the law given by Moſes;" and looking in faith, with a deſire and expectation of ſalvation, and in obedience to God; and perſevering ſo to do from day to day, in the uſe of the appointed means, he ſhall obtain effectual relief, and at length a perfect deliverance; though ſatan's temptations as yet haraſs his ſoul, and infeſt the church of God. Nor ſhall they whoſe faith is weak and wavering, if it be ſincere, fail of ſalvation: and the future lives of believers will evince that they have looked and obtained help. It is not neceſſary that they ſhould be able to account for theſe effects; as faith in a crucified Saviour is God's appointment, by which he works: and though man's reaſoning pride conſiders it as fooliſhneſs; yet they, who ſeek and expect help from God alone in his appointed way, will experience it to be the power of God to ſalvation. But all, who refuſe to truſt in the Saviour, will find every effort to eſcape deſtruction unavailing: the bite of the old ſerpent is mortal, and there is but one remedy of ſimple eaſy application, and on that very account too frequently deſpiſed and neglected; (*Notes 2 Kings*, v. 9—15.)

V. 10. *In Oboth, &c.*] *Oboth* ſignifies *bottles*, and probably the place was ſo called from the people's carrying water thence in bottles for their uſe in the deſert.

V. 14. *The book of, &c.*] Probably this was ſome *uninſpired poem*, or hiſtory, not now extant. The Iſraelites had by this time marched round to the country, which lay eaſtward of Canaan, beyond Jordan.

V. 16.

THE REVᵈ Mᴿ SCOTT'S BIBLE.

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wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon,

15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.

16 And from thence *they went* to Beer; that *is* the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

17 Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:

18 And the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by *the direction of* the law-giver, with their staves. And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah:

19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

20 And from Bamoth *in* the valley, that *is* in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

22 Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink *of* the waters of the well; *but* we will go along by the king's *high*-way, until we be passed thy borders.

23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel:

24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* strong.

25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.

26 For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared:

28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, *and* the lords of the high places of Arnon.

29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

30 We have shot at them: Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which *reacheth* unto Medeba.

31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that *were* there.

33 And they turned, and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not; for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

35 So

V. 16—18.] The people wanting water, the princes by the Lord's direction, with their staves only, opened the dry surface of the earth, and the water flowed in such abundance, that the place was called *Beer*, or *the well*; and the people expressed their admiration and gratitude in a song of praise.

V. 21—24.] The country of the Amorites was contained in the grant made to Abraham, and indeed the whole region as far as the river Euphrates: (*Gen.* xv. 18.) Yet perhaps Israel did not expect to have taken immediate possession of it; but to have first invaded the country, situated betwixt the river Jordan and the Mediterranean sea. They therefore, by their ambassadors offered peace to Sihon; and as Moses approved that measure, we may suppose that it was done by divine direction. (*Deut.* ii. 26.) But as he would not accede to their proposals, they began their conquests with him and his country, and proceeded to add to them that of Og also. (*Notes*, &c. *Deut.* ii. iii.)

V. 26, *In proverbs.*] That is, songs composed, and communicated from one to another by oral tradition; but not committed to writing; which was unknown or uncommon among these nations.

V. 29. *O people of Chemosh*, &c.] Chemosh was the chief idol of the Moabites, of which we shall frequently read hereafter.

V. 34. *Fear*, &c.] Og was a giant and very formidable, the people therefore feared to attack him till they were thus encouraged, (*Deut.* iii. 11.)

35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

CHAP. XXII.

Contains Balaam, 1st, Sent for by Balak, King of Moab to curse Israel, whose approach had disnayed him and his people in their attempts against them, 1—7. *2d. At first forbidden to go, but afterwards entering upon it, and accompanying the messengers,* 8—21. *3d. Withstood by the angel of the Lord, and miraculously rebuked by his ass; at length beholding the angel, and obtaining leave to proceed,* 22—35. *4th. Welcomed on his arrival by Balak, and joining him in offering sacri-*

AND

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the Lord will always be the enemies of his people; and they may at first seem to prosper in their attempts against them, but they will at last be utterly destroyed. For though the servants of God are often wearied, to take them off from self-dependence; yet those very disadvantages conduce to their final victory; as they excite them to call upon God, and to give him all the glory of their success; and then they become invincible! "When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 *Cor.* xii. 9—10.)—But alas, how soon are God's judgments and mercies forgotten by us! and how prone are we to relapse into former sins, though we have smarted for them, and even repented of them! to complain of and magnify every difficulty, to despise our choicest mercies, to be impatient of delays, to distrust, to murmur, and to rebel! Nay, where the dominion of sin is broken, it dwells within, and will break out again; sometimes openly to the dishonour of God, and the grief of his faithful servants: and under some trials, and in some cases, even the true believer may be so discouraged and tempted, and so yield to temptation, as to undervalue the gospel manna, the Bread of life, and the benefit of divine ordinances, as if they were "light food," and almost to wish that he had never set out in the ways of God. (*Psalm.* lxxiii. 13, 14.) But he will soon be ashamed of such thoughts, if they have ever wrought in his mind: and the hypocrite alone will abide in such a disposition. We have need, however to "watch "and pray, that we enter not into temptation," and it is profitable for us to be aware of the enemy within, as well as of the enemies around us; especially in times of severe trial and tedious discouragement.—But "whom the Lord "loves, he chastens;" and by his judgments upon hypocrites, as well as by personal corrections, he excites a salutary terror in their minds, when they are out of the path of duty, which brings them back with weeping and supplication: and when they repent and acknowledge their offence, he removes the dreaded destruction, though perhaps the smart of the correcting rod may continue for a time. He knows how to over-rule, not only the bite of poisonous serpents, but the persecutions of wicked men, and the temptations of the devil, for the good of those whom he loves: and our prayers are often most desirably answered, when the letter of the request is not granted; (*Num.* &c. 2 *Cor.* xii. 7—9.)—The Lord can relieve us from our dangers and distresses by the means which we should deem most unpromising; of which he hath given proof in redeeming so many souls from hell, from Satan, and sin, and bringing them to holiness and eternal life, by the manifestation of his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, by his agonizing and accursed death upon the tree, and by the preaching of the despised doctrine of a crucified Saviour. Oh! that the venom of the old serpent inflaming men's passions, and causing them to commit those sins, which must otherwise terminate in their eternal destruction, was but as *sensibly* felt, and the danger as plainly apprehended, as the Israelites felt the pain, and feared the death, which followed from the bite of the fiery serpents! Then none would shut their eyes to, or turn their backs of, Christ and his gospel: then would a crucified Saviour be so valued, that all things else would be accounted loss for him; (*Phil.* iii. 7—9;) then without delay, and with all earnestness and simplicity of dependence, they would apply to him in the appointed way, crying, "Lord save us, we perish:" Then from day to day would they look to him for pardon and healing, and their conduct would prove that they had received them: nor would any abuse the *freeness* of his salvation to them, whilst they estimated the price which it cost *him*; and their love to the Saviour would increase their dread and abhorrence of sin, and watchfulness against temptation.—But alas! this is not so: few feel their perishing need of Christ; and though it still be said, "Look "unto me, and be saved;" most men perish in their sins, even with the Bible in their hands, and the gospel preached in their hearing, and Christ in the gospel "evidently "set forth as crucified among them!" How then will they escape, who through pride of heart and love of sin reject this simple method of cure, or prefer their own inventions to this heaven-devised, purchased, and revealed salvation? Or who, abusing the doctrine, presume that their iniquities are pardoned, whilst their domineering passions, earthly affections, and unsanctified tempers, their prevailing covetousness, pride, anger, ambition, or lust, betray the venom of the old serpent to be in full force within?—But for those, whom the Lord hath healed, wells of salvation shall be opened through their whole journey: they need only use the appointed means with simplicity and diligence, and he will send supplies of heavenly consolations, and they shall rejoice in celebrating his praises. (*Isaiah*, xli. 17, 18.) Nor ought they to be unthankful to the instruments of their mercies, temporal or spiritual, whether they be princes, nobles, lawgivers, magistrates, ministers, or private persons.—Still however we must prepare for fresh conflicts and enemies: with sin and the powers of darkness we must make no peace or truce, nor even treat with them; nor may we expect any long cessation of hostilities. Even our neighbours, with whom we would, if possible, live peaceably, will often make themselves ready to battle. But trusting in the Lord's protection and obeying his commands, we shall be more than conquerors over every assailant, and profit by all their attempts to hurt us. For our inheritance is sure, and in the Lord's time and manner, every thing will concur in putting us in possession of it. But worldly inheritances are continually changing their masters: ill gotten gain never went well;

AND the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan by Jericho.

2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they *were* many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.

4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all *that are* round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time.

5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which *is* by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.

6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, *that* we may smite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest *is* blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

7 And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me. And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men *are* these with thee?

10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, *saying*,

11 Behold, *there is* a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.

12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they *are* blessed.

13 And

well; idolatrous dependences fail in the crisis of need; and the destruction of the wicked, being appointed of God, will be certainly and speedily effected.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1. *By Jericho, &c.*] At length the Israelites terminated their wanderings, by encamping on the banks of Jordan over against Jericho, where they abode until their passage over into Canaan.

V. 4. *Elders, &c.*] The Moabites were descended from Lot; the Midianites from Abraham by Keturah; they lived near together, and were much united in interest, as were also the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the Ammonites: but they were all enemies to the children of Israel, though such near relations.—The simile here employed is extremely expressive, as referring to the complete destruction which Israel had made of Arad, Sihon, and Og, with the nations over which they reigned.

V. 5. *Balaam, &c.*] Balaam appears originally to have been a noted soothsayer, or diviner, who had acquired eminent reputation for his skill in those practices. But having obtained some knowledge of the true religion, without any change in the disposition of his heart; he endeavoured to render that knowledge subservient to his interested and ambitious ends; and professing himself a prophet, he uttered his divinations in the name of Jehovah. (*Notes, &c. Acts*, viii. 11—13. 18—24.) It is not certain, whether the Lord had ever spoken to him, or by him, before this event, though probably he had; but he certainly did afterwards; yet have we abundant proof, that he lived and died a wicked man, and an enemy to God and his people; (*Matt.*, vii. 22, 23. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2.) Many expositors, however, think that he had at first been a prophet; and that his *divinations* were consequent to his evident departure from the Lord.—His abode was near the river Euphrates, at a very considerable distance; so far had his renown diffused itself!

V. 6, *Come now, &c.*] Balak had some general notion of the over-ruling influence of an invisible power; and at the same time had such an opinion of Balaam's interest with that invisible power, that he supposed he could do nothing so effectual to conciliate his favour, as to pay court to his prophet; nay he either actually thought, or he was willing to compliment Balaam, and to comfort himself, with the supposition, that his blessings or curses were infallibly ratified! If he could therefore have prevailed with him solemnly to curse Israel, and to bless Moab, he would then have defied the Israelites and their God, notwithstanding all the wonders of which he had heard. Such faith had he in this covetous and wicked man!

V. 8. *Lodge here all night, &c.*] Balaam seems to have been fully convinced that Jehovah was the true God, and the protector of Israel; if, therefore "his heart had not been "exercised with covetous practices," if he had not hankered after the "rewards of divination;" he would peremptorily have declared that he durst not, and would not, attempt any thing against the people of God. But though he could not but know that it was in vain to attempt anything in opposition to the almighty power of God: yet he had such unworthy notions of him as to think that, by one means or other, he would be induced to renounce the protection of Israel, and to come over to the side of Moab. This appears to have been the project which he had formed

13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.

16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak, the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me;

17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.

20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, *and* go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.

21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

22 And God's anger was kindled, because he went: and the Angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants *were* with him.

23 And

formed, and which he prosecuted for a long time, until he was still further given up to infatuation! Under this idea he desired a night's time, in hopes to obtain the Lord's consent to his intended journey; and consequently he expected some immediate revelation, which for wise reasons the Lord was pleased to afford him.

V. 13. *The Lord refuseth*, &c.] Balaam did not "bring "the messengers word again, as the Lord spake to him:" for he mentioned merely his refusal, but neither the peremptory manner, nor the reason, of it, viz. 'That the 'people were blessed, and therefore Balaam should not 'curse them.' Had he properly regarded the words of God, he would for ever have dropt all thoughts of such an undertaking; and had he faithfully reported them, they would have conveyed an important warning to Balak, not to meddle to his hurt; but he spake as one inclinable to the project, and not without hope of obtaining leave in due time; and as the matter was reported to Balak, he naturally concluded that the prophet only expected more respect and larger promises.

V. 15. *Balak sent*, &c.] The court which Balak paid to this man, who was supposed to possess an interest with some superior power, and by whom he hoped to obtain his assistance, exposes the hypocrisy of those persons who profess the true religion, and yet treat the ordinances and ministers of it with neglect and contempt, and will be at no trouble or expence about it.

V. 16, 17.] Neither conscience, nor the fear of God are excepted in this message: but the king fancied that he might except such complaisance from the prophet, when he allowed him to fix his own price in return.

V. 18. *I cannot*, &c.] Balaam did not say, that he was determined not to come; nor did he express any abhorrence of the crime or the temptation; (*Acts*, viii. 20;) but he rather seemed to regret, that he might not avail himself of so liberal an offer. He *cannot*; so much the greater his misfortune!—These touches must be carefully noted, if we would understand this instructive history.

V. 19. *Tarry ye also*, &c.] After the peremptory answer which God had given Balaam, he should have spoken to this effect: 'Say no more to me on this subject, but re-'turn home, and make the best terms you can with Israel. 'They are the Lord's people whom he is determined to 'bless; and you can do nothing against them by strata-'gem, or by power, human or divine: for my part I can-'not, I dare not, and I would not for the world, venture 'to oppose them; so tempt me no more.' He was therefore perfectly inexcusable in parleying with the temptation. But he was the slave of covetousness, and entertained dishonourable thoughts of God, and supposed that he could be induced to change his determination; therefore God in anger gave him the permission, which he so wickedly and eagerly desired.

V. 20, 21.] Balaam was in such haste to go, that he does not seem to have waited the call of Balak's princes, but to have arisen early, and prepared for his journey.

V. 22. *God's anger*, &c.] The Lord is pleased to *permit* almost an infinity of actions, which he doth not approve; and he is very angry at those who avail themselves of such permission to gratify their lusts. "They think evil, "but God means it for good." Nay the motive even of obedience may be so corrupt, that whilst the action is approved, God may abhor the principle from which it sprang: (2 *Kings*, x. 30, *Hosea*, i. 4.)—Balaam was instigated in the whole transaction by covetousness and ambition; (2 *Pet.* ii. 15;) and in a very wicked manner he repeatedly sought permission to curse a people whom the Lord had blessed, for the sake of enriching and advancing himself: for he appears not to have had any favour to Moab, or any quarrel with Israel, except for filthy lucre's sake. The Lord, with evident tokens of disapprobation, gave him leave to follow his inclination, and to go with the princes of Moab. Of this permission he eagerly availed himself, and both the motive and conduct displeased the Lord, who therefore met him "as an "adversary" in the way. His avarice was the more inex-

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19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye
also here this night, that I may know what
more the LORD will say unto me.

20 And God came unto Balaam at night,
and said unto him, If the men come to call
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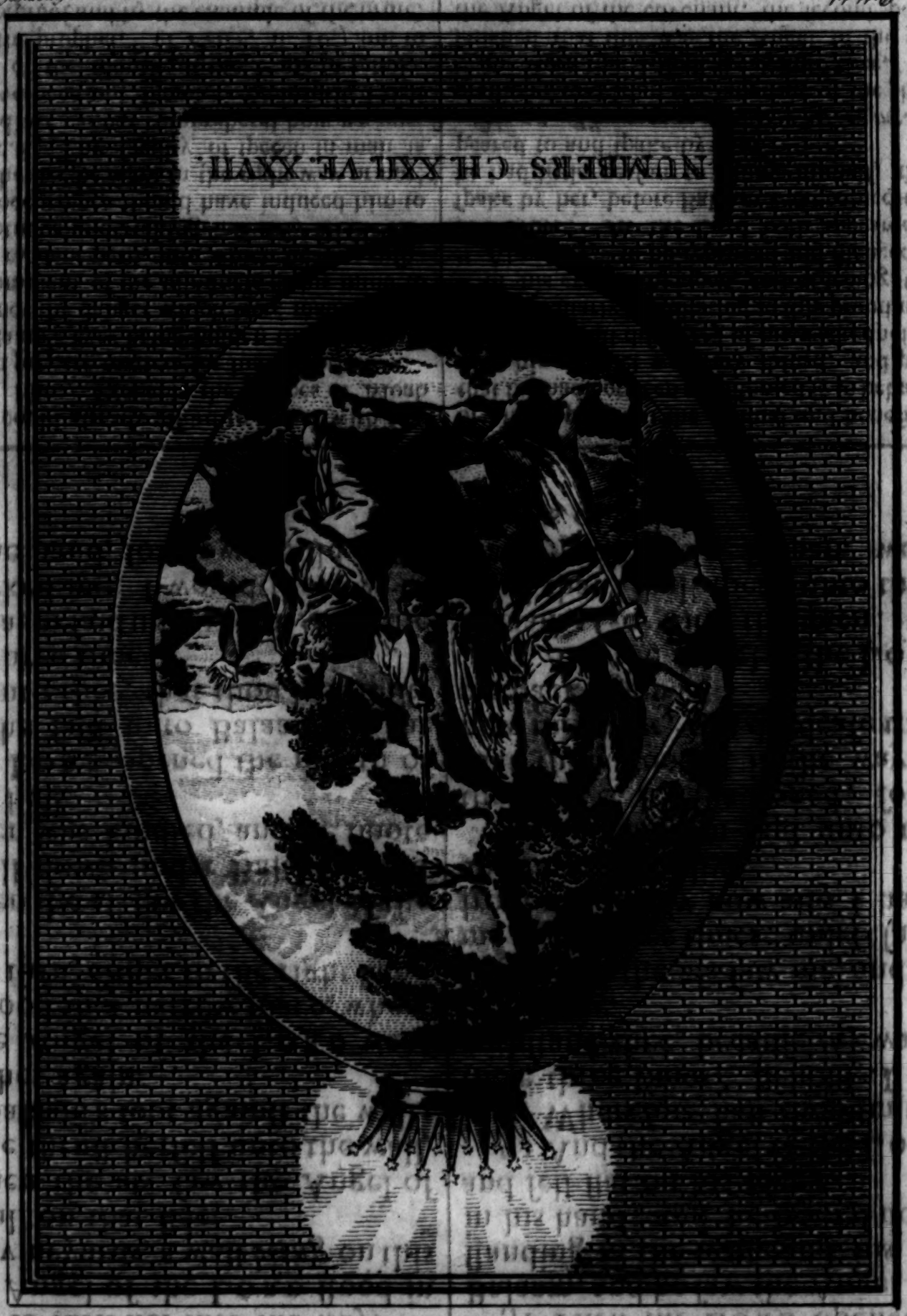

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23 And the aſs ſaw the Angel of the LORD ſtanding in the way, and his ſword drawn in his hand: and the aſs turned aſide out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam ſmote the aſs, to turn her into the way.

24 But the Angel of the LORD ſtood in a path of the vineyards, a wall *being* on this ſide, and a wall on that ſide.

25 And when the aſs ſaw the Angel of the LORD, ſhe thruſt herſelf unto the wall, and cruſhed Balaam's foot againſt the wall; and he ſmote her again.

26 And the Angel of the LORD went further and ſtood in a narrow place, where *was* no way to turn, either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the aſs ſaw the Angel of the LORD, ſhe fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he ſmote the aſs with a ſtaff.

28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the aſs, and ſhe ſaid unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou haſt ſmitten me theſe three times?

29 And Balaam ſaid unto the aſs, Becauſe thou haſt mocked me: I would there were a ſword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 And the aſs ſaid unto Balaam, *Am* not I thine aſs, upon which thou haſt ridden ever ſince *I was* thine, unto this day? was I ever wont to do ſo unto thee? And he ſaid, Nay.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he ſaw the Angel of the LORD ſtanding in the way, and his ſword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the Angel of the LORD ſaid unto him, Wherefore haſt thou ſmitten thine aſs theſe three times? Behold, I went out to withſtand thee, becauſe *thy* way is perverſe before me.

33 And the aſs ſaw me, and turned from me theſe three times: unleſs ſhe had turned from me, ſurely now alſo I had ſlain thee, and ſaved her alive.

34 And Balaam ſaid unto the Angel of the LORD, I have ſinned; for I knew not that thou ſtoodeſt in the way againſt me: now therefore, if it diſpleaſe thee, I will get me back again.

35 And the Angel of the LORD ſaid unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I ſhall ſpeak unto thee, that thou ſhalt ſpeak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

36 And

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inexcuſable, as he could already afford to travel with two ſervants attending him. Probably the princes of Moab were gone before to prepare matters for his reception.

V. 23—27.] Balaam's eyes being holden that he could not ſee the Angel, nor the danger which were made viſible to the aſs, was an emblem of the blindneſs of his mind to that imminent and evident peril, into which he was ruſhing by this preſumptuous undertaking. Surely all the circumſtances of this occurrence ſhould have induced him to have conſidered, whether he were in the right way or not!

V. 28. *What*, &c.] The faculty of ſpeech in man is the gift of God, and we cannot comprehend how we ourſelves articulate: we need not therefore be ſurpriſed that the Lord made uſe of the mouth of the "aſs to rebuke "the madneſs of the prophet," (1 *Peter*, ii. 16,) and to ſhame him by the reproof and by the example of the brute. Satan ſpake to Eve by a ſubtle ſerpent; but the Lord choſe to ſpeak to Balaam by a dull aſs: for he does not uſe the enticing words of man's wiſdom, but works by inſtruments and means which men deſpiſe.

V. 29. *And*, &c.] Balaam in his paſſion ſeems not to have noticed the miracle of the aſs's ſpeaking, or to have been the more enraged by that extraordinary event.

V. 30. *Am not I*, &c.] Thus the Lord reaſoned with Balaam by the mouth of the aſs; and, by reminding him of his property in the animal and benefit from her, and that ſhe had not been accuſtomed ſo to behave, he taught him that his conduct was very abſurd, and prepared the way for a more full diſcovery of his wickedneſs. It muſt have been peculiarly humiliating to this proud man, who boaſted "of his eyes being open, and of ſeeing the viſions of the "Almighty," to be reproved and ſilenced from the mouth of a brute! As the Lord both appeared to the aſs, and ſpake by her, before Balaam was enabled to ſee the viſion; he had little reaſon to plume himſelf, that the Lord appeared to and ſpake by him.

V. 32. *Thy way is perverſe before me.*] From this expreſſion; and from the language of the thirty-fifth verſe; "the word that I ſhall ſpeak unto thee," we may be fully ſatisfied that this was the Angel of the Lord's preſence, the Angel of the covenant, the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, viſibly appearing on this occaſion; (*Note Exod.* iii. 2.)

V. 34. *If it*, &c.] Though Balaam acknowledged that he had ſinned; yet he excuſed himſelf as ignorant that any oppoſition was made to him. He does not appear after all to have been convinced of his *wickedneſs* in this undertaking: and it was with heſitation that he propoſed to return; namely, if he might not proceed except at the hazard of his life. (*Iſ.* lvii. 17.)—So reluctant was he to

35 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which *is* in the border of Arnon, which *is* in the utmost coast.

37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth.

40 and Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that *were* with him.

41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak

give up the wages of unrighteousness! He was therefore again permitted to follow his own foolish devices.

V. 36. *And*, &c.] Balak went as far as the borders of his land to meet Balaam, that he might testify his respect to him, and welcome him into his kingdom.

V. 38. *Have I*, &c.?] Balaam's language plainly indicated his approbation of the project, and his readiness to concur in it; and betrayed his strong desire of succeeding; though he feared he should not be *able*.—In short he was determined to do all that he durst venture on, in order to perform the work and earn the wages; if he failed, it would be for want of *power*, not for want of a willing mind: accordingly we find that he at last perished in the attempt. He seems even made a merit of coming to Balak, through the midst of so much opposition.

V. 40. *And Balak offered*, &c.] It is probable that these sacrifices were offered to some of the gods of Moab, by whose aid Balak hoped to prevail over Israel through Balaam's incantations: for he was not yet aware of Balaam's project of drawing over the God of Israel to their side; and he therefore propitiated his idols, and invited Balaam, with the princes of Moab, to feast upon the sacrifice. (xxiii. 27.)

V. 41. *On the morrow*, &c.] Without loss of time the heathen king and the covetous prophet went to work; and Balak took Balaam to the high places where Baal was worshiped, that he might both take a view of the whole camp of Israel, and curse them by his gods. (1. *Sam.* xvii. 43.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our life is a succession of wanderings which will shortly close upon the brink of the grave: happy they who have an inheritance in the Canaan beyond! with comfort may they sit down on the banks of that Jordan which rolls between, and with composure wait the Lord's call to pass over and possess the promised land.—But the ungodly "are "often consumed with terrors;" though more generally afraid of "them who can only kill the body, than of him "who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."—The prosperity of the church, instead of inducing sinners to seek a share in it's privileges and felicity, generally excites their envy, hatred, and terror, and stirs up the spirit of opposition and persecution: but the crafty methods, which ungodly politicians take to secure themselves, generally involve them in more speedy ruin.—That propensity to religion, which results from reason and conscience, and the corrupted remains of tradition, is, through the depravity of our nature and the power of Satan, generally productive of absurd superstitions and abominable idolatries; by means of which that ambitious spirit is worshipped,

consulted, and depended on for information and assistance; his ministers are caressed and honoured; and his ordinances attended on with immense degradation, trouble, and expence. Great knowledge of doctrinal truth may fill the mind, many convictions may disquiet the conscience, and excellent words may proceed from the lips, of very wicked men: but the smallest degree of sanctifying grace is infinitely preferable to the most shining talents, or the most splendid gifts of knowledge, utterance, and eloquence; yea to those of prophecy and miracles; by which wicked men have sometimes become more extensively mischievous, more illustriously infamous, more heinously criminal, and more exquisitely miserable.—Let us then covet earnestly and diligently that best gift of divine love, which springs from, and is connected with, faith and hope, which never faileth but shall endure for ever.—If we have learned to lay up our treasure in heaven, and to seek that honour which cometh from God only, and to be content with food and raiment; and if covetousness, ambition, and sensuality be deeply mortified within us, we shall have little to hope or fear from man, and shall be greatly removed out of the way of temptation.—But as there is so much remaining of these evils in the heart; we all have reason to dread and shun those connections which almost every one covets; I mean the connections of ungodly men, who are able to promote us to honour and affluence.—These are especially dangerous to such as are called to speak in the name of the Lord: for by their influence, by making fair promises, exciting large expectations, and shewing great kindness and flattering respect, they prevail with many to sacrifice conscience, judgment, character, and the fear of God, to their humour and inclination; and to flatter and countenance their sinful practices.—The attraction is almost irresistible, the heart is deceitful, and who, that values his soul and knows himself, would venture into such a perilous situation?—Therefore "avoid them, pass not near "them, turn from them, and pass away."—But there have always been many who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and paid their court to those who could bid the highest and reward the best. Some of this character act the hypocrite, and ostentatiously avow their knowledge of and intimacy with the Lord, to cloke their wicked intentions: nay, they in this manner deceive themselves; calling "the Lord their God," whilst they neither keep his commandments nor seek his salvation.—These men do not hate sin, and they love it's wages, they mistake gain for godliness, and covetousness for wisdom. Fear restrains them for a time from those outward crimes which inwardly they are desirous of committing; and this restraint they mistake for *conscientiousness*. Convictions struggle

Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost *part* of the people.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st. Balak building seven altars and offering sacrifices on each of them, 1, 2. 2d. Balaam retiring to meet the Lord, and on his return blessing Israel; Balak remonstrating, and Balaam accounting for his conduct, 3—12. 3d. Other sacrifices offered by Balak in another place, Balaam blessing Israel more and more, and Balak unable to hinder him, 13—26. 4th. Sacrifices offered in a third place, 27—30.

AND Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balam offered on *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy

struggle against temptations, though overcome by them, and this they mistake for the *conflict between flesh and spirit*.—But they parley with the enemy, and nibble at the bait; they seek excuses, and watch for opportunities; they wrest the Scriptures, explain away the prohibition or threatening, or hunt out for some evasion; and even seem to crave leave to commit their darling sin.—Thus they provoke God to give them up to their own hearts' lusts; satan is permitted to increase the force of the temptation; some providence is misinterpreted into a favourable indication; and, by the ingenuity of a wicked heart, aided and prompted by the enemy, they at length find some method of expecting impunity in following their own wicked inclinations.—When persons are once judicially given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, all their boasted knowledge and wisdom fail them; and they are left to form such dishonourable notions of God, such erroneous opinions in religion, and such absurd projects in practice, as evidence their folly and ignorance, as much as they expose their desperate wickedness. Nor does this appear more surprising in any thing, than in their strong confidence that the Lord favours them, and their presumptuous hope that he will side with them, notwithstanding the manifest iniquity of their conduct.—But the Lord knows how to restrain the most desperate, and over-rule all to his glory and the good of his church.—By the way, as well as at the end of their course, he will manifest himself to be their adversary: and though they are not convinced, but rush through every hindrance to the gratification of their ungoverned lusts, these obstructions will one day rise up in judgment against them to their confusion; and every check, which stopped the sinner's career for a time, but hindered not his return to sin and continuance in it, will increase his final condemnation.—Such is man's folly and madness, that, with all his boasted powers, he may be sent to school to the most stupid of the animals: for though God hath formed us wiser than the beasts of the field; sin hath made us more foolish; and the conduct of the ox and the ass towards their possessors, yea their inhuman abusers, forms a continued though silent reproach of our forgetfulness of God, of our ingratitude, and rebellion; and may lead us to conceive in what language they might address us, and how they might plead the cause of their Creator, and their own cause, against us, to our shame and confusion, if the Lord should open their mouths! How might they reproach multitudes with their abuse of God's gift, in the cruel tyranny exercised upon them! with their senseless anger vented in oaths and curses, revilings and unmerciful blows furiously bestowed upon a brute beast, even to their own loss! How might they expose man's cruelty to his own species, yea to his own soul and body; and his excessive animal indulgence, as if his understanding only served him to invent methods of being more exquisitely a brute, by refining in gratification!—Little cause then have we to be *proud* of our reason, which preserves us not from such absurd and destructive excesses; or of the faculty of speech which is so shamefully abused: and it may serve to abate our self-admiration to reflect, that if God pleases, he can make a dull ass see further, and speak better, than any of us. Let us then watch and pray against these dishonourable and unreasonable passions; and listen to the voice of God, as speaking to us by all the creatures with which we are surrounded.—The people of God are in general but little aware of the machinations which are forming against them; whilst all the policy and power on earth, and in hell are combined for their destruction. Yet they need not fear: "for he that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth "nor sleepeth."—The Lord sees through every plot, and holds every heart in his hand: "no weapon formed against "his church shall prosper." (*Isaiah*, liv. 17.) He restrains, intimidates, and infatuates, as he pleases.—He hath blessed true believers, and of him alone it can be said, "He, whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou "cursest is cursed."—Let us then cast our lot among them, and then we shall be safe and happy; "for if God be for "us, who can be against us?" "O Lord God of hosts "blessed is the man, who trusteth in thee!" O give us true faith, and increase it more and more!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1, 2.] The last verse of the foregoing chapter should have formed the beginning of this. Upon the high places consecrated to Baal, with the camps of Israel full in view, Balaam ordered seven altars to be built, and a bullock and a ram to be offered upon each; for a sacrifice to the God of Israel; as it is evident from the whole history. He had heard that Israel had a single altar, on which they offered bullocks and rams, and were accepted in so doing: he therefore foolishly fancied, that by outdoing them in the number of altars and sacrifices, the Moabites might gain the ascendency in the favour of Jehovah, draw him over to their side, and obtain leave to curse and destroy Israel. (2 *Kings* xviii. 22. *Psal.* l. 9. 13—21.)—With great obsequiousness Balak complied with his expensive demands.

V. 3. *Peradventure*, &c.] The Lord had before met Balaam in anger: but having offered such costly sacrifices, the selfish prophet now hoped that he would countenance his design;

thy burnt-offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

4 And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

6 And he returned unto him: and, lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, *saying*, Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel.

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied?

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

11 And

design; yet conscious guilt rendered him doubtful, and caused him to insert a *peradventure*.—Probably Balaam used some incantations in his retirement to obtain a favourable meeting from the Lord, such as he had formerly employed in his soothsayings; (23. xxiv. 1.)—*Formal* converts very frequently interweave their superstitious, philosophical, or carnal notions, with the truths, ordinances, and precepts of God; and from this source almost all the corruptions of the Christian religion have been deduced.

V. 4. *God met*, &c.] The Lord had many important ends in view, in meeting and speaking to this wicked man, notwithstanding the unwarranted method in which he sought him; such as the encouragement and admonition of Israel, and of his church in all ages; the warning of their enemies; and the discovery of those depths of wickedness which are in man's heart.—And Balaam, instead of being humbled for his atrocious wickedness, boasted of his great services, and deemed it highly meritorious in him, that he had prevailed on Balak to offer so many and such costly sacrifices to the Lord; though they were not offered at his expence. But he was blind indeed, notwithstanding his boasts, (xxiv. 3, 4,) to suppose that the God of heaven would be pleased with sacrifices offered in hypocrisy, without any regard to the meaning of such services, or any repentance, faith, love, and obedience; but merely from covetousness and malice, with an intention of cursing and destroying his people! (*Notes* &c. 1 *Sam.* xv. 21—23. *Prov.* xv. 8, 9. *John*, xvi. 2.)

V. 7. *He took*, &c.] Balaam began his speech with some circumlocutory introduction, and in such a style as was used in prophecy, which approached to the language of poetry. But the Lord, probably by filling his heart with the dread of his power and wrath, constrained him reluctantly to pronounce blessings on his people. He that opened the mouth of the ass, guided the mouth of this wicked man to speak words as contrary to the habitual desires of his heart, as those of the ass were superior to the powers of the brute: and when we duly advert to the temper of the speaker; we shall perceive that the Lord spake by Balaam as entirely as by the ass; that the divine power was as really and effectually put forth in the former as in the latter case;

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied?

and that Balaam had no more to glory in, than the animal, but much indeed to be ashamed of.

V. 8. *Defy*, &c.] Balaam was sent for from Aram, or Mesopotamia, to curse Israel, and thus disdainfully to set them at defiance: and he confessed that he came with that intention. Had he been allowed to do it, Balak also would have defied them, and have made war upon them. (*Notes*, &c. 2 *Sam.* xvii. 10 43—45.) But, as the Lord had not cursed and defied them; (that is, had not rejected them, or determined to treat them as enemies;) he would not allow Balaam to curse them; though the curse causeless could have done them no hurt, and would have deceived and hardened Balak. But he was pleased to guide Balaam's tongue to bear a most honourable testimony to his perfections and the felicity of his people.

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

V. 9. *Shall dwell alone*, &c.] Beholding the regular encampment of the Israelites in the wilderness, separate from other people, Balaam was led to speak language, not only suited to that situation, but to the peculiar favour shewn them, and their separation from other nations, by their laws, religion, and character as a holy people; in all which they were a type of true Christians.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

V. 10. *The dust*, &c.] The multitudes of the Israelites were innumerable as the particles of the dust, according to the promises made to their fathers; (*Gen.* xiii. 16. xxviii. 14.) Even the fourth part of them, or one of their four grand encampments, could not be numbered.

Let me die, &c.] Balaam spoke the words of God, yet not without some understanding of their meaning, and some conviction of their truth; and we may consider this as an important ancient testimony to the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of retributions. He not only bore testimony to the *temporal* felicity of Israel; but to their character also as a righteous people, accepted of God: and he was led to acknowledge that they, who are truly righteous, are happy in death and beyond it.—That calmness, with which the true believer expects and submits to the stroke of death; that hope full of immortality, which supports him at the solemn season; that prospect of eternal felicity in another world in which he rejoices, and which he recommends to others,

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed *them* altogether!

12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

13 And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.

14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, while I meet *the LORD* yonder.

16 And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me; thou son of Zippor.

19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

20 Behold, I have received *commandment* to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither

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others, render his latter end desirable in the judgment even of those wicked people, who are not devoid of convictions respecting a future judgment, are checked in their sinful pursuits with fears of eternal misery, and would be glad of such a deliverance from the horror of dying in sin, and sinking into hell, if it could be obtained in a less humiliating and self denying way. They wish, they hope, and in some sense they intend, to die the death of the righteous: but the love of wealth, honour, or pleasure, in one form or other, prevents their acting according to their convictions, and living the life of the righteous. They therefore procrastinate, and quiet their consciences with the hope of future amendment: or they take up with some false confidence, some superficial reformation or external change; or, in the pride of their hearts, they neglect and despise that only way of salvation, by which a sinner can be righteous before God. Thus many, who have wished to die the death of the righteous, live impenitent and perish in sin, as Balaam did.

V. 11. *Curse*, &c.] The Israelites were not enemies to Balak or the Moabites, who without cause were enemies unto them: but, as it is common in such cases, they construed their own malice into enmity on the side of Israel. For they who are enslaved to pride and malice scarcely ever forgive those whom they have injured!

V. 12. *Must I not*, &c.] Balaam attempted to make a merit of necessity; and when he was constrained against his habitual inclination to bless Israel, he would be thought very obedient to the Lord in so doing.—Yet after he had declared that *God had not cursed them, and he could not*, he persisted in his endeavour, foolishly hoping that the Lord would be induced to change his mind! Probably he was encouraged in this expectation, by recollecting, that he had got leave to come at the second time, though it had been refused him at the first: for God's patience emboldens men's wickedness.

V. 13. *Thou shalt*, &c.] Balak seems to have thought that Balaam's mind was indisposed for cursing Israel, by seeing their numerous and orderly encampments all at once; he therefore hoped to prevail in cursing one division first, against which he probably intended to commence hostilities.

V. 19. *God is*, &c.] Men are deceitful in promising, changeable, and easily induced to revoke their engagements, or unable to fulfil them. On the contrary the Lord is perfectly sincere, faithful, unchangeable, almighty: and though, after the manner of man, he is said to repent of the kindness that he has shewn, when his creatures by ingratitude provoke him to withhold his bounty; and of his judgments denounced against sinners, when they repent, or when in answer to the prayers of his servants he delays the execution of them: yet in the grand event of things it will be found that every promise and engagement made to believers was exactly accomplished, and all his threatenings to unbelievers fully and finally executed.—This declaration by the mouth of Balaam had a peculiar reference to the state of Israel: God had absolutely determined to bless them as a nation, and as a type of true believers; he had plainly declared his purpose, and Balaam had with hesitation intimated it to Balak. Yet they were seeking to bribe or to tease him, (if I may so speak,) to alter his mind and revoke his word. But Balaam was at length constrained to bear testimony against himself, and to proclaim the madness, folly, and wickedness of his undertaking.

V. 20. *I cannot*, &c.] Balaam still continued to manifest his inclination to earn his wages if possible; but "he *had received to bless*," (the word *commandment* is not in the original;) for blessings on Israel were so put into his mouth, that he could not help pronouncing them, and he could not reverse them.

V. 21. *He hath*, &c.] The former national sins of Israel were atoned for and pardoned: the people were not at that time guilty of idolatry or rebellion; but were in a very

neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt: he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

23 Surely *there is* no inchantment against Jacob, neither *is there* any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat *of* the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

25 And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

26 But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee into another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.

28 And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon.

29 And Balaam said unto Balak, build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.

30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

CHAP.

very obedient disposition, had much true religion among them, and were *comparatively* righteous. Thus the true believer is fully pardoned and accepted, and really sanctified and obedient: in him the Lord beholds not iniquity, or perverseness; none allowed, none unsubdued, none unpardoned.

The shout, &c.] The Lord God, as reigning over his people, protecting them, and leading them forth to war, was among them; of whose power they had had such experience, (22,) that they were inspired with triumphant confidence in him; and at his word were ready to shout for the battle, and attack their enemies with assurance of success.

V. 23. *Surely*, &c.] It is taken for granted by this language, that satan was allowed to exercise some power in answer to the expectations of those who used inchantments. But Israel was so immediately under the divine protection, that nothing of this kind could injure them.—Balaam mentions their safety and his own impotency, with the same apparent regret, that satan mentioned the hedge which the Lord had made about Job. (*Job* i. 10.)—The favour at that time shewn to Israel was a specimen of the protection always afforded the people of God; the remembrance of which would encourage the faith and inspire the praises of future ages; whilst with admiration they would consider what God had wrought.

V. 24. *Behold*, &c.] At length Balaam not only pronounced blessings on Israel, but likewise denounced the doom of all their enemies; which might have been a warning to Balak, and to himself also, to desist from their vain and perilous attempt. (xxiv. 17.)

V. 29. *And Balaam said*, &c.] Not being yet willing to give up all hopes of succeeding.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Proud and wicked men spare no pains, and grudge no expence, when they imagine that they can purchase God's favour, or induce him to concur in, or connive at, their mischievous designs. And such is the ignorance of God, of his law, and of true godliness, incident to human nature, that multitudes persist themselves, and find teachers to encourage them, in these vain attempts of obtaining the favour of God, without mortifying their lusts, or humbling themselves before him; who in return have their covetousness gratified by such pupils and for such instructions!—Mere Pharisees have frequently exceeded God's own people in the measure of external services, and in the degree of partial mortification; and not knowing of any thing more excellent in religion, they are thus confirmed in self-confidence and self-preference; they "trust in "themselves that they are righteous, and despise others"; and even boast of their doings, as if they had made God their debtor, at the very time when their hearts are full of malice and wickedness! (*Isai.* lviii. 2, 3. *Luke* xviii. 1, 2.) But God abhors pompous externals and self-imposed services, nay even the most zealous attendance on his own ordinances, whilst the heart remains destitute of humility, repentance, faith, and love to him and to his people; and still more, when the devotion is a mere cloke of hypocrisy to cover the most unjust and oppressive intentions.—The spiritual worship of his servants, though less shewy, is of a more excellent kind; a broken and contrite, a believing and thankful, a pure and upright heart, are more suitable to his nature, and more precious in his sight, than "thou-"sands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil."—As they are a people peculiarly favoured, so are they peculiarly characterised: they "dwell alone," they are despised by, and they pity, the surrounding multitudes, who separate them from their company, and with whom they desire no fellowship: their maxims, customs, laws, and conduct are dissimilar from those of all other men: their inheritance, their home, their citizenship are in heaven; their affections, conversation, pursuits, and pleasures are heavenly: and whilst they are deemed the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, and not fit to live; the Lord accounts them the excellent of the earth, of whom the world is not worthy. Though they are few in every place, when compared with the ungodly, they are very numerous in the whole; may the Lord multiply them an hundred fold, how many soever they be! Though despised by those who know them not, yet they attract the reverence even of such wicked men as are acquainted with them, but it is often accompanied with hatred and resentment. (*Mark* vi. 17—20.) Many of this description, while they espouse an opposite interest, and lead a contrary life

Contains, 1st. Balaam more copiously blessing Israel, and predicting the destruction of their enemies, 1—9. 2d. Balak enraged at Balaam, and dismissing him, 10, 11. 3d. Balaam accounting for his conduct, and uttering a remarkable prophecy, 12—25.

AND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for inchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding *in his tents* according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;

4 He hath said, which heard the words of God,

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life, through the power of domineering lusts, and prevailing temptations, secretly account the righteous happy; and wish to have their lot with them at death, and in the eternal world: but in vain; for can they, who in defiance of their own convictions choose to serve satan and their sins in this world, reasonably expect to be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting? There are indeed a mixt multitude, who attend the camp, whom satan and his servants do not honour with their hatred or opposition, but despise and only despise, as suspecting no harm to the cause from either their example, influence, or endeavours. But let not such *mere professors* deem themselves interested in those precious privileges, which belong to the true Israel of God.—Notwithstanding disappointments and convictions, the lusts of wicked men will revive and reign: for whilst some, who persecute the cause of God, are pushed forward by implacable malice and envy, others are induced to concur by insatiable avarice and restless ambition; and through mean unworthy thoughts of God, they flatter themselves, that, by altering their measures, they shall either prevail with him to change, or they shall frustrate his counsels. "But he is of one mind, who can turn him?" (*Job*, xxiii. 13, 14.) He will infallibly perform his kindest largest promises to his people; and execute his most terrible denunciations upon the multitude of his inveterate enemies. And whilst earth and hell combine their power and policy to prevent it, "the Lord sitteth in the heavens,—hath them in derision," and will soon "speak "to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displea-"sure." (*Notes, Psalm* ii. 1—6.) Nor will the most costly sacrifices prevail with him, any more than the most powerful armaments can force him, to renounce the protection of his people, or to retard the execution of vengeance upon his enemies. Let believers then rejoice in, and sinners *tremble* at, his unchangeableness, his truth, and power. Let none flatter themselves with the hope of impunity in sin; but let all take warning to flee from the wrath to come, to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—If the Lord sees that we trust in his mercy and accept of his salvation; that we indulge no secret lust, and continue not in any presumptuous rebellion, but uprightly endeavour to serve and glorify him: we may be sure that he looks upon us as accepted in Christ; and that our sins are all pardoned and buried in the depths of the sea, no more to hurt us than if they had never been committed. If this be our case, the Lord hath blessed us, and hath given commandment to bless us; and he will never suffer it to be reversed: and if satan cannot prevail to deceive us, or defile us, he cannot have us by inchantments or constrain-

ons, by inchantments or divinations. Having all hearts and tongues in his hand, the Lord can not only restrain the malice of our enemies, but constrain them to speak well of us, and do well to us; to confess their impotency, to condemn themselves, and to foretel their own misery with their own mouth; (even while they madly persist in their destructive opposition!) and to acknowledge with reluctant admiration the work of God for us and in us.—Well then may the believer triumph in his King the Lord of Hosts, and re-echo with grateful exultation, "What hath God wrought!" Oh the wonders of his providence and grace! The wonders of his redeeming love, of his pardoning mercy, of his new-creating Spirit! What a change in our state, our character, and our prospects!! Every former mercy now becomes an earnest of still further blessings; and from past deliverances, we may infer the certainty of final victory and eternal triumphs. Thus shall every true believer; thus shall the whole church of God, be unto him for a name, and for a praise; whilst with their eyes they shall behold the destruction of the wicked.—But is this the reader's character and felicity? Let us seriously examine ourselves, and earnestly pray the Lord to decide this infinitely important question. To this let us aspire; this let us pursue with unremitting diligence, and undiverted attention: let us watch and pray always, for our enemies are vigilant, indefatigable, and malicious: and surely we ought to be as unwearied in glorifying God, and doing good to his people, and to all men, as his enemies are in their mischievous endeavours. Even Balaam's retirement to meet the Lord; and Balak's assiduous attention to his burnt-sacrifices, and rising up to hear the message from God, may furnish us with profitable hints, if we apply them to ourselves, in our pursuits of nobler objects, from higher motives, and for other purposes.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *When*, &c.] Balaam had been constrained to return from his retirement and inchantments, with answers the very reverse of his wishes and intentions: he therefore deemed it to no purpose to repeat them. But it is not agreed among expositors, nor is it easy to decide, whether in desperate rebellion he determined to curse Israel without asking leave, and thus to satisfy Balak, and earn his reward, but was forcibly restrained by the Lord and constrained to pronounce further blessings: or whether under a pang of conviction he desisted from his purpose for the present, and freely yielded himself to the inward impulse of the Spirit of God in blessing Israel, though he afterwards returned to his wicked projects.

V. 3, 4.] The words in the third verse rendered,

"subsist-

God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! *and* thy tabernacles, O Israel!

6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, *and* as cedar-trees beside the waters.

7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed *is* he that blesseth thee, and cursed *is* he that curseth thee.

10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed *them* these three times.

11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour, but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers, which thou sentest unto me, saying,

13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind: *but* what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come, *therefore, and* I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

15 And

"*whose eyes were open*," are generally allowed to mean, "*whose eyes were shut*," or *closed*: whilst those in the fourth verse mean, "*whose eyes were opened*." Balaam's eyes had been shut, but were at length opened: *shut*, when he thought of cursing Israel, but now *opened* to perceive that they were blessed: or his bodily eyes were shut, whilst those of his understanding were opened. He is supposed to have referred to the time, when his eyes were holden, that he saw not the angel, until the ass fell down with him; (xxiii. 27—31;) when his eyes were opened, and he fell flat on the earth. For the words *into a trance* are not in the original, and the passage runs thus: "he saw the vision of the Almighty, falling, but having "his eyes opened." But, whatever be the exact meaning of the words, they savour of ostentation; and the pure language of the Spirit of God seems to have been polluted, as it were, by the filthy vessel through which it passed.—Balaam's visions and revelation exalted him above measure; and he appears to have courted admiration, when he was not able to obtain the riches he coveted.

V. 6. *As*, &c.] As valleys verdant, fruitful, and widely extended; as luxuriant well cultured gardens on the banks of some fertilizing river; as aromatic trees diffusing a fragrant smell, or cedars most stately and comely to behold, planted as it were by God's own hand, in the most advantageous situation, and not needing or receiving any human culture: such did the camps of Israel appear, and such would be their fruitfulness and prosperity.

V. 7. *He shall pour*, &c.] That is, 'God shall water 'Israel abundantly with heavenly blessings; and as seed 'sown in a well watered place, their multitudes shall 'increase still more and more.'

And his king, &c.] Agag seems to have been the name of the several kings of Amalek in succession. That nation was at this time very powerful, and their king very renowned and prosperous: but it was here foretold, that Israel should in due time be governed by more prosperous princes, who should overcome the Amalekites. This was fulfilled in the time of Saul, who seems to have been especially predicted.

V. 8. *He hath*, &c.] That is, 'God hath given Israel 'that strength, which makes him as formidable to his ene-'mies, as the rhinoceros,' (for that animal is supposed to be meant,) 'is to the beasts of the forest.'

V. 9. *He couched*, &c.] (*Note, Gen.* xlix. 9.)—Israel is here represented as powerful yet disposed to peace, magnanimous but generous, not prompt to injure others yet fearless of them; but woe to him that should awake this sleeping lion

Blessed is he, &c.] (*Gen.* xii. 3. xxvii. 29.) Perhaps Balaam hoped at last to share the blessedness of Israel, by thus blessing them: but he did it reluctantly, not out of love but by constraint, and therefore he was not included. This however was a prophecy of Israel's successes under their most prosperous kings; and of the spiritual prosperity, and felicity of the church of Christ, and all it's cordial friends; and it implied a solemn warning to all their enemies, from Balak, and Balaam himself, down to their latest successors, to desist from such an unequal perilous contest.

V. 10, 11.] Balak was at length enraged to the greatest degree, and expressed his indignation in the most furious manner: and, not without a mixture of scorn and disdain of Balaam, for having missed so fair a prospect of advancing himself, out of regard to the God of Israel, he dismissed him from his presence.

V. 13. *That will I*, &c.] Balaam had repeatedly confessed his inability to go beyond the word of the Lord: but here he appears disposed not only to vindicate his conduct

15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;

16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, *which* saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

17 I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

18 And Edom shall be a possession: Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations, but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

21 And he looked on the Kenites; and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock;

22 Nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?

24 And ships *shall come* from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict

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conduct to Balak, as having never engaged to curse Israel; but also to put a favourable construction upon the whole affair, as if from the first he had not had any great inclination to the attempt, but had only waited to know the Lord's will and obediently to perform it.

V. 6. *Knew*, &c.] Balaam spake with increasing confidence of the revelations with which he was favoured: and though similar words were used by the true prophets, (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1—3.) yet from so wicked a man they have an air of ostentation. "The secret of the Lord is "with them that fear him;" but Balaam had little reason to boast of his knowledge of God and heavenly things.

V. 17, *There*, &c.] David himself, as swaying the sceptre over all Israel with great reputation, and as gaining considerable victories over the Moabites and others, (2 *Sam.* viii. *Psal.* lx.;) and the kings of his race as ruling over Judah, and still further subjugating the Moabites and neighbouring nations, may here be intended.—But the prophecy must have its full accomplishment in the kingdom and spiritual victories of Jesus Christ. Some suppose that by *Sheth* the ancestor of a Moabitish tribe is meant, and this opinion seems most natural: others however think that Seth the son of Adam, and the progenitor of the whole postdeluvian world, is intended. If this latter be the meaning, the sense must be, that Christ should *establish his dominion over* the whole human race, either as willing subjects, or as conquered enemies sentenced to destruction. This prophecy was uttered almost 1500 years before Christ; so that Balaam was enabled to penetrate into futurity, and to predict the coming of the Saviour: he saw, that though the Messiah was not at that time visible, he would at length be manifested; and though his Advent was not near, it would certainly arrive. Some suppose that he also dolefully foreboded his own doom in these words; and looked forward to the consummation of all things, when he should behold the Lord Jesus, as his offended Judge, and not as a loving Saviour. It is also thought that the tradition of this star predicted by Balaam, being disseminated through the East, prepared the way for the wise men following the star which appeared at the birth of Christ. Even the Jewish writers allow this prophecy to relate to the Messiah.

V. 18, 19.] The victories of the house of David are here foretold, as typical of the triumphs of David's Son, who shall destroy all, "that will not have him to reign over "them," however they may attempt to secure themselves.

V. 20. *The first*, &c.] The Amalekites were one of the most ancient and prosperous of the nations; and they were the first who attacked the Israelites. This prophecy was accomplished by Saul and David, after whose days, there appear but few vestiges of that once flourishing people.—(1 *Chron.* iv. 43.)

V. 21, 22.] As Jethro a Midianite is afterwards called a *Kenite*, (*Judges*, i. 16,) it is supposed that the *Midianites* are here meant; who, dwelling in a rocky country, deemed themselves safe from the assaults of their enemies. But notwithstanding this, they were wasted by the Israelites, till at length they were carried captive by the Assyrians, as it is supposed, about the time of the captivity of the ten tribes.

V. 23. *Alas*, &c.] Either Balaam meant that the predicted desolations would be so dreadful, that it would be miserable to live during such calamities; or that the time referred to was so distant, that all who then heard him would be dead long before it arrived.

V. 24. *The*, &c.] The coast or isles of Chittim in Scripture always mean the inhabitants of Europe, especially the Greeks or Romans. (*Dan.* xi. 30.) The passage is therefore an evident prediction of the victories of the Greeks, or Macedonians, under Alexander and his successors; and of those of the Romans after them. The latter especially, coming from far in ships, overturned the kingdoms which had long subsisted in that part of the world, and possessed them; causing great afflictions to the people, who inhabited the ancient Assyria, but still greater to the Hebrews, (especially in the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.) And they have ever since been tyrannizing in one form or other, over the world and the church; but shall at length be destroyed as entirely, as the Amalekites were. This part of the prophecy is not yet fulfilled.—What a surprising series of prophecy have we here in few words, which in former accomplishments hath already evidenced to successive generations the divine authority of the Scriptures; and shall to future ages demon-

affish Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

CHAP.

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strate the same truth with undeniable evidence! 'Thus,' says Dr. Lightfoot, 'Balaam, instead of cursing the church, 'curseth Amalek the first, and Rome the last, enemy of 'the church.'

V. 25. *And Balaam rose*, &c.] Though Balaam for the present desisted from his purpose of cursing Israel; yet he was not rendered more friendly to them; or cured of his avarice, which at length suggested to him a still more diabolical plan. The care of God over Israel, in defeating this malicious confederacy, is long after mentioned as an evidence of his kindness and of their ingratitude for it. (*Micah*, vi. 5.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the church of God may renew their attacks as often, or vary them as much, as they please; yet they can by no means gain any real advantage: for it pleases the Lord to bless his people, and he will make all their opposers see, feel, and acknowledge it, though they be filled with rage and desperation; (*Rev.* iii. 9.) Nay they shall in some cases be constrained to allow the excellency, and to forebode the greater prosperity, of the righteous!—Under the protection of Judah's Lion they may securely rest; and whoever disturbs *them*, will stir *him* up to their own destruction: for their protector will suffer the malice of their enemies to proceed, only till it hath accomplished his purposes for their good, and he will then execute vengeance on the guilty instruments of their salutary chastisements; (*Isaiah*, x. 5—7. 12. 15—19.) But whilst he renders those most accursed and miserable, who wish evil or do evil to his servants; he will abundantly bless all who pray for them and seek their peace, out of love to their character and religion.—They, who are kept back from worldly honour and affluence by an upright heart and a good conscience, will be great gainers in the event: and the minister especially, who, faithful to his trust by word and deed, with meekness and firmness, reproves the wickedness of those who had thought to promote him to honour, will have "an hundred fold more in this present "time, and in the world to come everlasting life." But such persons as have just light enough in their minds, and restraint enough upon their consciences, to induce their hesitation at going the whole length which a wicked Patron may require, and thus lose his favour, and balk their own preferment, continuing still the slaves of sin, and the enemies of God, are very miserable in this world, and likely to be so in the world to come; as they sin with greater aggravation than the ignorant can do. Let us not then attempt to serve God and Mammon, or to halt between Jehovah and Baal; but let us follow the Lord fully, and he will make up every loss to us.—The consent of wicked men in sin will at length issue in bitter hatred and severe recriminations; and many foresee the miseries coming upon others, who suspect not greater and nearer miseries that await themselves. But what benefit would accrue to any of us! what cause should we have to glory or rejoice, if we understood all mysteries and all knowledge, if we could penetrate the secrets of the most remote futurity, and develope the book of the divine decrees; "if we saw the "visions of the Almighty, and knew the knowledge of the "Most High," and had our eyes opened to see things hidden from all others since the foundation of the world; whilst distant nations and successive ages were destined to celebrate our fame: if at the same time we remained the slaves of covetousness, ambition, lust, or malice; impenitent and unpardoned, under the wrath of God, doomed "to the fire that never shall be quenched, and the worm "that never dieth!"—All these endowments would but aggravate our guilt, and enhance our condemnation. Nor is there any indissoluble bond between extensive and exact knowledge, even in theological subjects, and "holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord." That light which discovers the glory of God, the beauty of holiness, the hatefulness of sin, the excellency of Christ, and the worthlessness of earthly things, will always produce a correspondent disposition and behaviour; and be attended with repentance, faith, love, gratitude, benevolence, and an heavenly walk and conversation. But let us "take heed "lest the light, which is in us be darkness; for if it be, "alas! how great will that darkness be!" (*Matt.* vi. 23.) Let us seriously examine, whether, or in what respects, our knowledge, attainments, experience, or profession, excel those of Balaam? No fluency or excellency of speech, even in preaching or in prayer; no gifts of knowledge or prophecy; no visions and revelations of the Lord, are intrinsically, and decidedly different from, or superior to, the boasted endowments of this wretched man, who "loved "the wages of unrighteousness," and died the enemy of God and his people. But a broken and contrite heart, which mourns for, hates, and flees from sin; a simple dependence on the Redeemer's atoning blood and sanctifying grace; a chearful subjection to the divine command, and submission to his will; an habitual aim to glorify God and benefit his people, are less splendid, but far more excellent, attainments, and invariably accompany salvation. No glorious hypocrite ever possessed these; yet the feeblest true believer is conscious of them in some degree, and is daily longing and praying for more of them: whilst, perhaps through an error in judgment and satan's subtlety, he overlooks all these *infallible* evidences of *saving* grace, and indulges desponding fears, because he cannot emulate some boasting Balaam's gifts!—But it is the duty and privilege of such persons to bless the Lord and rejoice in what he hath done for them. Here by faith they behold the Saviour, *nigh unto them*; shortly shall they *see him nigh*, as come to complete their redemption, and consummate their felicity: whilst the wicked, whether infidel, profligate, or hypocritical, shall be banished far from his bliss-giving presence; "for the first shall be last, and the "last shall be first!"—Yet the Lord will glorify himself and benefit his church by the gifts, and in the punishment, of such wicked men: and in these prophecies we may discern both the misery of the ungodly, the vanity of all worldly dependences and preeminence; the approaching destruction of every enemy who hath done evil in the sanctuary; the consequent triumphs of the church; and the universal spread of the gospel, notwithstanding afflictions, persecutions, and damnable heresies; whilst they assure our faith in the full accomplishment of all the promises, which respect our own eternal salvation.

NOTES,

Contains, 1st: The Israelites drawn into whoredom and idolatry by the Moabitish and Midianitish women, 1—3. 2d. God commanding the public execution of the ringleaders: the presumptuous crime, of an Israelite and a Midianitish woman, punished with immediate death by Phinehas; and a terrible devastation among the people by the plague, 4—9. 3d. The Lord's acceptance of Phinehas's zeal; the names of the parties slain; and the Lord's command to make war against the tempters, 10—18.

AND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping *before* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

9 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1—3.] The temptation, by which the Israelites were on this occasion seduced into sin, was the result of counsel which Balaam gave to Balak—(xxxi. 16. *Rev.* ii. 14.)—We have just read, that "Balaam went, and returned to his place;" yet we afterwards find that he was slain in the war to which his counsel gave rise: it seems therefore most natural to suppose, that he directly went home in sullen despondency; whence after a time satan suggested this counsel to him; (*John*, xiii. 2;) that he then returned back to propose it to Balak; and that waiting to observe its success, he was slain among the Midianites. Many commentators however suppose, that he gave Balak this counsel, before he went home; and they are consequently puzzled to find out what brought him back again; except it were to claim his recompence, when his project had succeeded, or to give further advice, (xxxi. 8.)—This wicked man could not obtain leave to denounce a solemn curse on Israel, but he instructed Balak how to seduce Israel to bring a curse upon themselves; or at least to deprive themselves of the Lord's immediate protection, and to provoke such judgments, as would both diminish their numbers and discourage their hearts.—Under the mask of friendship an intercourse was opened, and some of the Moabitish and Midianitish women, (who were it seems no ways backward to such an infamous undertaking,) were employed to allure the Israelites to an unreserved intercourse with them. This having taken place in many instances, an invitation was given them, to those idolatrous feasts, at which every species of licentiousness was practised: this was readily complied with, and they flocked in great numbers, and joined in this abominable worship; the inferiors being encouraged by the example of their superiors. (*Notes, &c. 1 Kings*, xi. 1—8.)

V. 4, 5.] The principal persons, in the several tribes and families, seem to have been the ringleaders in this complicated provocation: and it is probable that the anger of the Lord had already occasioned a plague among them, which was making dreadful ravages. If therefore the people at large would not have their idolatry interpreted into a national forfeiture of the covenant, and be all together destroyed by the pestilence; immediate vengeance must be executed on the chief transgressors, by putting them to death, and hanging them up ignominiously as a sacrifice to the justice of God.—From comparing the sum total of those who died by the plague, (9,) with that mentioned by Paul, (1 *Cor.* x. 8,) it is computed that no less than one thousand persons were thus put to death.

V. 6—8.] This action of Zimri and Cozbi was done in direct defiance of God, of Moses, and of the congregation who in great multitudes were penitently confessing their sins, and deprecating the divine displeasure. It was the greatest insult and outrage imaginable upon all authority, divine and human; upon all order, and even upon common decency; in such circumstances, whilst numbers were dying by the sword of the magistrate, and much greater multitudes by the hand of God, for a man thus to triumph in his wickedness, and to dare the whole government to touch him.—Phinehas was the second priest and successor to the High Priesthood, and doubtless as high in authority as in rank: as a magistrate he was commissioned, both by God and by Moses, to slay those who were joined to Baal-peor: Zimri was notoriously and avowedly guilty; but whilst others trembled to come near him, Phinehas in the courage of zeal and faith, executed vengeance upon him and his infamous paramour at once.

No.

9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, (while he was zealous for my sake among them,) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace.

13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, *even* that was slain with the Midianitish woman, *was* Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites.

15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that *was* slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he *was* head over a people, *and* of a chief house in Midian.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them:

18 For

No conduct could in every view be more unexceptionable; nor can it ever be drawn into a precedent, to countenance acts of private revenge, of religious persecution, or even of irregular public vengeance. The objections therefore of some infidels to this part of holy Scripture, expose their ignorance or disingenuity, as much as they do their hatred of this sacred book. For there is not one of them, if God and religion were out of the question, but, in such a crisis, when a daring rebel set the regular magistracy at defiance, and evidently meant to instigate the people to a revolt, would have allowed that the *welfare of the community was the chief law*, and that so extraordinary a case required an extraordinary remedy; and would have applauded a decisive measure, though irregular, which after all this does not in the least appear to have been.

V. 11—13.] This action of Phinehas, springing from zeal for the honour of God and of his law, and being productive of so much good to the people; (as in consequence "the plague was stayed," which would otherwise "have "consumed the children of Israel,") received the sanction of the divine approbation, and was "imputed to him for "righteousness;" (*Psalm*, cvi. 28—31.) Let who will censure it, the heart-searching God accepted and rewarded it as a righteous action; and confirmed the priesthood to his family for future generations in consequence of it.

An atonement, &c.] That is, "a sacrifice to divine justice, expiating guilt by inflicting deserved punishment."

V. 17, 18.] (xxxi.) Though Balaam's counsel was first given to Balak king of Moab; yet probably the Midianitish women, especially of the higher ranks, like Cozbi, were more generally the tempters, than the Moabitish; and the former nation came into the measure more generally than the latter: therefore the Midianites were selected to be made examples of, for the warning of the Moabites who were spared at this time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The friendship and caresses of the wicked are more dangerous than their enmity: for none can prevail against God's people, if they are not overcome by their inbred lusts; no inchantment can injure them, except the fascination of worldly interests and pleasures; nor would the enemy of souls be so much gratified by seeing a worshipper of God cast into a fiery furnace, as by alluring him to the indulgence of his sensual inclinations, in opposition to the law of God.—When once the fence of the divine command is broken through, the progress from one kind and degree of sin to another is natural, and almost unavoidable: and when the barrier of female modesty is removed, the transition to the most impudent licentiousness is frequently very sudden; nor are any persons more pestilential to the human species than beautiful abandoned women.—Numbers in every age are brought to an ignominious execution; and still greater multitudes are hurried to the grave by dreadful diseases, in consequence of listening to the allurements of such insinuating tempters: in short "their feet lead "down to death, and their steps take hold of *hell*:" (*Notes*, &c. *Prov.* ii. 16—19. v. 3—15. vi. 24—35. vii. 5—27.) Yet multitudes, increasing multitudes, throng the fatal path, regardless of God's law, in defiance of his vengeance, and in neglect of the dictates of common sense, universal observation, and their own painful experience of the fatal effects. But let him who would have health, credit, and comfort in this world, or escape the wrath to come, flee youthful lusts, and shun such fascinating tempters, as he would persons infected with a baleful pestilence.—The more advanced in rank or authority offenders are, the deeper is the aggravation of their guilt, and the more extensive the influence of their pernicious example: it is therefore of vast importance that judgment should impartially be administered, without respect of persons. Yet there have always been those, who would attempt to elude, outbrave, or bribe human justice. When this is the case, zeal for the honour of God and the welfare of society should excite all those who are invested with authority, to disregard every personal consideration, in stepping forwards, and bringing an over-grown offender to condign punishment. And they, who consistently with relative obligations, by any means, boldly attempt to check the progress of daring wickedness, shall be honoured and recompensed of God, though they be censured and hated by men for so doing.—In large collective bodies there will be a diversity of characters; we should not therefore censure and condemn whole multitudes for the crimes of some individuals, which the rest perhaps detest and mourn over.—None will be more surely and severely punished, than they, who, after Satan's example, as his agents, and with his subtlety, tempt others to wickedness: nor should we dread or shun any enemies so much as these.—The Lord will chastise his offending people, but

their

18 For they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains 1st. The people numbered by the command of God, with the number of each tribe, and the sum total, 1—5. *2d. Orders concerning the division of the promised land,* 52—56. *3d. The numbering of the Levites,* 57—62. *4th. The performance of God's word noticed,* 63—65.

AND it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saying,

2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

4 *Take the sum of the people,* from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, *of whom cometh* the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites:

6 Of Hesron, the family of the Hesronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.

7 These *are* the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty.

8 And the sons of Pallu; Eliab.

9 And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This *is that* Dathan and Abiram *which were* famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:

10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.

11 Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.

12 The sons of Simeon, after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites:

13 Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.

14 These *are* the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15 The children of Gad, after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites:

16 Of

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their tempters he will utterly destroy.—How dreadful will the change be to those, who sink together, from the indulgence of sinful pleasure into the torments of hell-fire! And how mad are men, who wantonly provoke the vengeance of that God who can so easily thus destroy them!—But let us not close our reflections, without looking to Jesus, who in zeal for the Lord of Hosts and love to his people, made an atonement, not with the blood of others, but with his own blood, that we might not be consumed; and who is in consequence established in an everlasting priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, an High Priest upon the royal throne of universal and everlasting dominion.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1, 2.] The plague, recorded in the foregoing chapter, had, it seems, swept away the last remains of that devoted generation, which had provoked the Lord to "sware in his wrath that they should not enter" Canaan: another numbering therefore of the people was appointed, preparatory to the taking possession of the promised land. In this chapter, not only the tribes, but the families of Israel are registered; that is, the names of those sons, or grandsons, of the patriarchs, who were the progenitors of the grand subdivisions in the several tribes. We have more full genealogies of them in the first book of Chronicles, and there are some trifling variations betwixt the accounts: but these things have little to do with our edification. The sum total was decreased 1820 from the former numbering; but there are more considerable variation in the numbers of the several tribes: these the reader may easily ascertain for himself, by comparing this chapter with the first of this book. I shall only observe, that as the tribe of Simeon was decreased above 37,000; it hath been not improbably conjectured, that by Zimri's example and influence, they had been peculiarly guilty in the wickedness of Baal-peor; and that the 24,000 who died on that account were chiefly of this tribe.

V. 11. *The children* &c.] The children of Korah, not conforming to their father's crime, or speedily repenting of it when he was cut off, were preserved, and afterwards became eminent in the service of the sanctuary.

16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites:

17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites.

18 These *are* the families of the children of Gad, according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

19 The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

20 And the sons of Judah, after their families, were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites:

21 And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.

22 These *are* the families of Judah, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23 *Of* the sons of Issachar, after their families; *of* Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Pua, the family of the Punites:

24 Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.

25 These *are* the families of Issachar, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26 *Of* the sons of Zebulun, after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.

27 These *are* the families of the Zebulunites, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph, after their families, *were* Manasseh and Ephraim.

29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead *came* the family of the Gileadites.

30 These *are* the sons of Gilead: *of* Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:

31 And *of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites:

32 And *of* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and *of* Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.

33 And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

34 These *are* the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred.

35 These *are* the sons of Ephraim, after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.

36 And these *are* the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.

37 These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim, according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These *are* the sons of Joseph after their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin, after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites.

39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: *of Ard*, the family of the Ardites: *and* of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

41 These *are* the sons of Benjamin, after their families: and they that were numbered of them *were* forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42 These *are* the sons of Dan, after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of Dan, after their families.

43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44 *Of*

V. 29—37.] The descendents of Joseph had increased exceedingly in the wilderness; especially, the tribe of Manasseh! though Ephraim, according to Jacob's prediction, afterwards became the most numerous. (1. 32—35. Gen. xlviii. 19.)

V. 33.

44 Of the children of Asher, after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Berites.

45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites.

46 And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Sarah.

47 These *are* the families of the sons of Asher, according to those that were numbered of them, *who were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48 Of the sons of Naphtali, after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites:

49 Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem the family of the Shillemites.

50 These *are* the families of Naphtali, according to their families: and they that were numbered of them *were* forty and five thousand and four hundred.

51 These *were* the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

53 Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names.

54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given, according to those that were numbered of him.

55 Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.

56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

57 And these *are* they that were numbered of the Levites, after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites.

58 These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites: and Kohath begat Amram.

59 And the name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

60 And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD.

62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

63 These *are* they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho.

64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

65 For

V. 53—56.] The quantity of land was ordered to be proportioned to the numbers of each tribe: the situation was to be determined by lot. Thus the decreasing of any tribe before their settlement in Canaan, proved the decrease of their future political importance and affluence, in all succeeding ages.

V. 62—65.] As the Levites were not numbered from twenty years of age; or among the "children of Israel" as heirs of Canaan, it is not probable that they were included in what follows.—For upon each enquiry it was found that not one man of that number remained, concerning which "the Lord had sworn in his wrath that "they should not enter into his rest." Thus the word of the Lord was magnified, and an intimation was given, that a speedy entrance into Canaan might be expected, now that the rebellious generation was extirpated. We may entertain a pleasing hope, that the temporal punishment was sanctified to multitudes to bring them to repentance before they died; and so might become the means of their eternal salvation, as a blessed effect of the respite granted them. Among all this multitude there was not one man aged sixty, except Caleb, Joshua, and some of the Levites. Of the women we have no information, and no express proof that they were involved in the sentence.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Death is continually making awful havock of the human species, and causing surprising revolutions in families and nations: yet all is appointed in perfect wisdom, justice, and truth. This should excite us to meditate upon the sinful nature and destructive tendency of sin, the procuring cause of all these devastations: we should thence take

65 For the LORD had ſaid of them, They ſhall ſurely die in the wilderneſs. And there was not left a man of them, ſave Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The deciſion of the cauſe of Zelophehad's daughters, 1—11. 2d. Moſes warned of his approaching death; and, in anſwer to his prayer, Joſhua ſolemnly appointed to ſucceed him, 12—23.

THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the ſon of Hepher, the ſon of Gilead, the ſon of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, of the families of Manaſſeh the ſon of Joſeph: and theſe *are* the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

2 And they ſtood before Moſes, and before Eleazar the prieſt, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, ſaying,

3 Our father died in the wilderneſs, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themſelves together againſt the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own ſin, and had no ſons.

4 Why ſhould the name of our father be done away from among his family, becauſe he hath no ſon? Give unto us *therefore* a poſſeſſion among the brethren of our father.

5 And Moſes brought their cauſe before the LORD.

6 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

7 The daughters of Zelophehad ſpeak right: thou ſhalt ſurely give them a poſſeſſion of an inheritance among their father's brethren: and thou ſhalt cauſe the inheritance of their father to paſs unto them.

8 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If a man die, and have no ſon, then ye ſhall cauſe his inheritance to paſs unto his daughter.

9 And if he have no daughter, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10 And if he have no brethren, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren,

11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his kinſman that is next to him of his family, and he ſhall poſſeſs it: and it ſhall be unto the children of Iſrael a ſtatute of judgment; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and ſee the land which I have given unto the children of Iſrael.

13 And when thou haſt ſeen it, thou alſo ſhalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

14 For

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take occaſion to renew our repentance, to ſeek forgiveneſs; to value the ſalvation of Chriſt, to remember how frail we are, to prepare for the approaching ſummons, and to fill up our remaining days in "ſerving our generation according "to the will of God." Then will death be diſarmed of his ſting, become our friend, and convey us to heaven, when our appointed period on earth is finiſhed.—But unrepented unpardoned ſin arms death with unutterable horrors; and laſting infamy, perhaps in this world, and everlaſting ſhame, contempt and miſery, will be the doom of thoſe who are "driven away in their wickedneſs;" however *famous*, and renowned they were among their ill-judging fellow-ſinners. Though the Lord puniſh the iniquity of the fathers upon their unbelieving poſterity; yet he will preſerve thoſe who do not imitate their parents, ſin, from ſharing their puniſhment; and the infamy of the father ſhall only make the piety and uſefulneſs of the ſon more noticed. The word of God will be ſurely performed; and the eye of the Lord can diſcern, and his arm can reach, every ſinner, in the midſt of ſurrounding multitudes: and though reſpites are not pardons, yet they give ſpace and opportunity for repentance. The promiſes likewiſe are irrevocable, and they who follow the Lord fully, ſhall certainly at length have the comfort of it.—In all our different ſituations in life, let us ſubmit to the ſovereignty, admire the equity and wiſdom, and be thankful for the goodneſs, of the Lord: and above all things deſire, that, whatever elſe is denied us, we may have an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1, 2:] In the orders for the diviſion of the land juſt given, no proviſion had been made for the females, in caſe of the failure of male-iſſue. (xxvi. 52—56.) The five daughters of Zelophehad, therefore, conſidered themſelves as left deſtitute, having neither father nor brother to inherit, and being themſelves entirely overlooked: and they agreed to refer the caſe to Moſes, and the other rulers, whether it was not equitable that they ſhould inherit their father's portion; and whether females in future might not inherit the father's eſtate, when there was no male iſſue, both of which the Lord himſelf determined in the affirmative.

V. 3, 4.] Zelophehad had not incurred a forfeiture any more than the other Iſraelites who were all involved in one common ſentence: why then, all

14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that *is* the water of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

20 And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him, after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him

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they, should his memory be disgraced, and he treated as if his line were extinct, when he hath left so many children? (xxxvi. *Joshua*, xvii. 3—6.)

V. 16. *The God*, &c.] (*Note*, xvi. 22.) Moses in thus addressing the Lord intimated that as he "knew what "was in man;" (*John*, ii. 25,) he alone could point out the proper person to rule over the congregation. We find he also prayed, that he might enter Canaan, but the Lord would not grant his request; and he consequently acquiesced. (*Deut*. iii. 23—27.) His chief concern, however, was about the congregation, that a proper person might succeed him in the arduous and important station which he filled.

V. 18. *In whom*, &c.] Joshua had long attended on Moses, and had been endowed with the Spirit of wisdom, and excellent gifts were conferred on him: but his succession had not been publicly recognized until this time. Moses never so much as intimated a desire that one of his sons might succeed him; as Eleazar had succeeded Aaron: nor do we find that *they* entertained any such expectations; on the contrary, they seem to have acquiesced in the Lord's determination, and to have obeyed and honoured Joshua, without envy or murmur!—Imposition of hands, by those whom the Lord employed to teach and rule his church, has in every age been the token of a man's designation to some particular office, and of his receiving authority to execute it.

V. 19. *Give him a charge*, &c.] That is 'Seriously 'instruct him in the important duties of his place, warn 'him to be upon his guard against its temptations, and in 'the most earnest manner charge it upon his conscience to 'be diligent and faithful in it.' (1 *Tim*. vi. 13, 14. 20. 2 *Tim*. iv. 1.)

V. 20. *Put some of thine*, &c.] Joshua was thus admitted to a present share in the authority, that the people might be accustomed to obey and honour him.—Moses lived, and was very busily employed, some time after this warning: and Joshua would be very useful to him, in easing him of the burden of the civil government, whilst *he* gave himself wholly to attend on the interests of religion.

V. 21. *Who shall ask counsel*, &c.] Moses asked counsel of the Lord himself immediately; but all the future rulers of Israel were directed to this method of consulting the Lord by the High Priest.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believing expectation that the word of the Lord would be performed in due season, and the desire of an interest in the promised inheritance, which these young women manifested; and the modest manner in which they preferred their petition, without indulging secret murmurs and discontent, are well worthy of imitation. The readiness, also of Moses to listen to their suit with candour, and to consider it with attention, and to seek counsel from the Lord about it, should carefully be observed, and copied by magistrates, ministers, and all entrusted with authority.—The earnestness, with which Moses, under the divine rebuke and on the verge of death, pleaded in behalf of the congregation; the anxiety that he expressed for their welfare after his decease; and his disinterestedness, with the peaceful submission of his sons to the undistinguished lot of ordinary Levites, are excellent models for our spirit and conduct.—Though we do not by impenitent and presumptuous wickedness exclude ourselves from the inheritance of heaven, yet our sins should be considered as the deserving causes of all our sufferings in this world, and of our final dissolution.—The word of God is our only and our sufficient standard of faith and and practice: but in applying general precepts to particular cases, sober sense and sound judgment will be requisite: and all those things which are not out of the reach and province of our reason, will be found upon careful investigation evidently reasonable.—When difficulties, relative to practice, are fairly proposed and solidly resolved, they become adjudged cases, extensively and durably useful.—None but Jesus ever liveth to rule and protect his church: others have their subordinate and temporary services allotted them, which having finished, they must be gathered to their fathers: and though their dismission should be with a rebuke for some miscarriages, of which they have been guilty; the prospect of heaven, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, will induce a peaceful and submissive acquiescence.—Advancing sanctification always evidences itself, by a proportionate regard to the interests of true religion;

him before Eleazar the prieſt, and before all the congregation.

23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge; as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains laws, 1ſt, Concerning the daily ſacrifices, 1—8. 2d, Thoſe for the ſabbath, 9, 10. 3d, Thoſe for the new moons, 11—15. 4th, Thoſe for the feaſt of the Paſſover, and of unleavened bread, 16—25. 5th, Thoſe for the feaſt of Pentecoſt, 26—31.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Command the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, My offering, *and* my bread for my ſacrifices made by fire, *for* a ſweet ſavour unto me, ſhall ye obſerve to offer unto me in due ſeaſon.

3 And thou ſhalt ſay unto them, This *is* the offering made by fire which ye ſhall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the firſt year without ſpot, day by day, *for* a continual burnt-offering.

4 The one lamb ſhalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb ſhalt thou offer at even;

5 And a tenth *part* of an ephah of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of beaten oil.

6 *It is* a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a ſweet ſavour, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

7 And the drink-offering thereof *ſhall be* the fourth *part* of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy *place* ſhalt thou cauſe the ſtrong wine to be poured unto the LORD *for* a drink-offering.

8 And the other lamb ſhalt thou offer at even: as the meat-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof, thou ſhalt offer *it*, a ſacrifice made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

9 And on the ſabbath-day, two lambs of the firſt year without ſpot, and two tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof.

10 *This is* the burnt-offering of every ſabbath, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.

11 And in the beginnings of your months ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks and one ram, ſeven lambs of the firſt year without ſpot.

12 And

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which will be encreaſed by the expectation or approach of death: and the more any one hath experienced the difficulty and burden of important ſtations of uſefulneſs, the more ſenſible will he be, that none but the Lord can furniſh a man for, or ſupport him in, ſuch ſervices. We ſhould therefore with all earneſtneſs apply to him "who "hath the fulneſs of the Spirit," to ſet ſuitable perſons over his congregations: even ſuch men as by their example, and inſtructions, and by the proper exerciſe of authority may go before the people, and take care of them, that they be not as ſheep, which have no ſhepherd. (*Mark*, vi. 34.) Nor is that man fully qualified for any ſervice in the church of God, who is deſtitute of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, however learned, eloquent, ingenious, or ſagacious he may otherwiſe be.—They, who are appointed to ſuch offices, whether as magiſtrates or miniſters, ſhould be ſolemnly charged to attend to the duties of them: it is the duty of all the people of God, to honour them, to obey them, and to pray for them: and thus ſupported, they need not fear the hardeſt ſervices, to which the Lord may call them in his providence; for his grace ſhall be ſufficient for them.—But in Joſhua's ſucceſſion, we are reminded, "that the law was given by Moſes," which by reaſon of our tranſgreſſion could not bring any of us to heaven; "but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt," to accompliſh the ſalvation of every believer.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2.] The ceremonial worſhip had been greatly interrupted during the continuance of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs; (*Amos*, v. 25.;) but as they were about to enter upon the wars of Canaan, and to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, they were reminded not to neglect the ordinances of God, in the hurry and peril of the one, or in the ſatisfactions of the other.—We have in this and the following chapter ſome repetitions of former laws, with further explications; and ſome new appointments, eſpecially with reference to the number and kind of the ſacrifices to be offered on particular occaſions: but there is not much, which requires interpretation, or affords new ſubject of practical inſtruction. The reader muſt therefore be referred to the notes and practical obſervations already made, on the laws for the ſeveral kinds of ſacrifice, and for the ſolemn feaſts.

V. 7. *Strong wine*, &c.] (*Ex.* xxix. 38—42.) The wine to be poured on the ſacrifice muſt be the beſt of the kind. Wine is ſtill the memorial of the blood of Chriſt ſhed for the ranſom of many, by the remiſſion of ſins.

V. 9, 10.] This was a new injunction, aptly ſignificant both of the extraordinary devotions of the ſabbath, and of the need there is, that in thoſe devotions we ſhould "be-"hold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the "world." (*Ezek.* xlvi. 4, 5.)

V. 11, *And*, &c.] The Apoſtle Paul intimates that the new moons were a ſhadow, of which Chriſt was the ſubſtance; (*Col.* ii. 16, 17;) but nothing typical appears in them, except the numerous ſacrifices offered upon them. The providence of God, "appointing the moon for certain "ſeaſons,"

12 And three tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one ram;
13 And a several tenth-deal of flour, mingled with oil, *for* a meat-offering, unto one lamb; *for* a burnt-offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.
14 And their drink-offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third *part* of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth *part* of an hin unto a lamb: this *is* the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year.
15 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the LORD shall be offered, besides the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.
16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the passover of the LORD.
17 And in the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.
18 In the first day *shall be* an holy convocation: ye shall do no manner of servile work *therein*.
19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire, *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish.
20 And their meat-offering *shall be of* flour mingled with oil: three tenth-deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth-deals for a ram;
21 A several tenth-deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs:
22 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you.
23 Ye shall offer these beside the burnt-offering in the morning, which *is* for a continual burnt-offering.
24 After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.
25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.
26 Also on the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the LORD, after your weeks *be out*, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.
27 But ye shall offer the burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year;
28 And their meat-offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals unto one bullock, two tenth-deals unto one ram,
29 A several tenth-deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;
30 *And* one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.
31 Ye shall offer *them* besides the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish,) and their drink-offerings.

CHAP.

"seasons," was acknowledged by those who observed it; and the dedication of all their time to him who gave it, was inculcated on them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Two coincident subjects here demand our attention, which are by no means new to us, yet may stir up our minds by a salutary repetition: We are reminded of the continued efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and of our need constantly to depend upon it: and we are taught the constancy, with which the Christian is required and disposed to wait upon God in his ordinances, both as means of deriving grace from the fulness of Christ into his own soul; and of rendering to God the glory, which is due unto him, as the Creator, the God of providence, and the God of our salvation.—No hurrying employments, or perilous situations, or prosperous circumstances, should induce slackness in our religious exercises: on the contrary we should on such occasions be excited to greater diligence in seeking help from the Lord, or giving thanks to him. And when young people are going to settle in life, and remove to habitations of their own, it is peculiarly the duty of ministers, parents, and godly friends, to admonish them to establish the worship of God in their families from the first; which will save them much trouble afterwards, and bring a blessing upon them, and all that they uprightly engage in. Every day should be at least begun and ended by seriously worshipping God with the best of our time and powers: sabbaths call for double measures of personal and family-religion: and seasons of peculiar humiliation for sin, of seeking any special blessing, of solemn self-examination and self-dedication previous to approaching the Lord's table; or of remembering signal mercies received, will require days still more entirely set apart for these purposes. But we must take care that one duty does not preclude another; that all be accompanied with the exercise of

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains laws for the ſacrifices to be offered, 1ſt. At the feaſts of trumpets, 1—6. *2d. On the day of atonement,* 7—11. *3d. At the feaſt of tabernacles,* 13—40.

AND in the ſeventh month, on the firſt *day* of the month, ye ſhall have an holy convocation: ye ſhall do no ſervile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

2 And ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, *and* ſeven lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

3 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals for a bullock, *and* two tenth-deals for a ram,

4 And one tenth-deal for one lamb, throughout the ſeven lambs:

5 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, to make an atonement for you:

6 Beſide the burnt-offering of the month, and his meat-offering, and the daily burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, according unto their manner, for a ſweet ſavour, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

7 And ye ſhall have on the tenth *day* of this ſeventh month an holy convocation; and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls: ye ſhall not do any work *therein.*

8 But ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD *for* a ſweet ſavour; one young bullock, one ram, *and* ſeven lambs of the firſt year; they ſhall be unto you without blemiſh.

9 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals to a bullock, *and* two tenth-deals to one ram,

10 A ſeveral tenth-deal for one lamb, throughout the ſeven lambs:

11 One kid of the goats *for a* ſin-offering, beſide the ſin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering of it, and their drink-offerings.

12 And on the fifteenth day of the ſeventh month ye ſhall have an holy convocation; ye ſhall do no ſervile work, and ye ſhall keep a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days.

13 And ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering, a ſacrifice made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year; they ſhall be without blemiſh:

14 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth-deals to each ram of the two rams,

15 And a ſeveral tenth-deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs;

16 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

17 And on the ſecond day *ye ſhall offer* twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the firſt year without ſpot:

18 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

19 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings.

20 And

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of repentance, and of faith in and love to the Lord Jeſus: and that all be productive of righteouſneſs, and true holineſs in our whole conduct: otherwiſe God will abhor our moſt ſolemn ſervices and abundant devotions. (*Pſalm*, l. 8—20. *Iſaiah*, i. 10—17.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 1. *And in the ſeventh month*, &c.] There were more ſolemnities in the ſeventh month than in any of the reſt. It formed a kind of vacation between the harveſt, and the enſuing ſeed-time: and might intimate that the ordinances of God ſhould be the Chriſtian's recreation from the fatigue of neceſſary buſineſs; and that religion does not interfere with our true intereſt in any thing. All theſe ſolemnities had before been appointed, but the ſacrifices to be ſeverally offered upon them were at this time preſcribed. (*Notes*, xvi. xxv.)

V. 12—40.] The decreaſe of the number of the bullocks, which were ſacrificed on the ſeveral days of this feaſt, until on the laſt and great day, only one was offered, is the moſt obſervable circumſtance in this law. And the reaſon of this regulation is not evident; unleſs it be intimated that the Moſaic inſtitution would wax old, and vaniſh away when the promiſed Meſſiah came.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would well underſtand the Scriptures, we muſt beſtow pains to compare one part with another; for the Lord ſeems

20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;

21 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

22 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;

24 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

25 And one kid of the goats *for* a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

27 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

28 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

30 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

31 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

32 And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

33 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

34 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

35 On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly; ye shall do no servile work *therein*.

36 But ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD, one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

37 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner;

38 And one goat *for a* sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

39 These *things* ye shall do unto the LORD in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free-will offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings.

40 And Moses told the children of Israel, according

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seems purposely to have arranged them in this manner, to exercise our diligence in searching them; and to distinguish betwixt those who value the knowledge of the truth, and those that do not. (*Prov.* ii. 1—8.)—We are here again reminded that the trumpet of the gospel calls us to mourn for sin, to receive the atonement, to rejoice in the Lord, to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to abound in our "spiritual sacrifices, which are through "Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God." The more consolation we receive from him, the more abundant and unwearied should we be in serving him; and a spiritual mind will be refreshed and recreated by the ordinances of God, after the fatigue of worldly care and labour; more than any carnal person will be with festivity and dissipation. The spiritually minded therefore will value leisure and opportunity of attending upon God's solemn ser-

privilege, and will not be casting about for an excuse: they will not suppose that public ordinances render secret devotion unnecessary, or that the prayers of the minister supersede the necessity of their own; much less will they imagine that the merits and sacrifice of Christ for them render their obedience and good works unnecessary. Every thing here reminds us of our sinfulness: our very repentance and application to Christ need forgiveness through him; and whether we mourn for sin, or rejoice in the Lord and praise him for his mercies, "the life that we "live in the flesh must be by the faith of the Son of God;" until at the close we go to be with him, behold his glory, and extol his mercy, "who hath loved us, and washed us "from our sins in his own blood;" "to whom be honour, "and glory for ever, Amen."

NOTES.

according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains the law concerning religious vows; in what caſes they were valid, and when they were to be diſannulled, 1—16.

AND Moſes ſpake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Iſrael, ſaying, This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or ſwear an oath to bind his ſoul with a bond; he ſhall not break his word, he ſhall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

3 If a woman alſo vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind *herſelf* by a bond, *being* in her father's houſe in her youth;

4 And her father hear her vow and her bond wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, and her father ſhall hold his peace at her: then all her vows ſhall ſtand, and every bond wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

5 But if her father diſallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, ſhall ſtand: and the LORD ſhall forgive her, becauſe her father diſallowed her.

6 And if ſhe had at all an huſband when ſhe vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul;

7 And her huſband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows ſhall ſtand, and her bonds wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

8 But if her huſband diſallow her on the day that he heard *it*; then he ſhall make her vow which ſhe vowed, and that which ſhe uttered with her lips, wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul, of none effect: and the LORD ſhall forgive her.

9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their ſouls, ſhall ſtand againſt her.

10 And if ſhe vowed in her huſband's houſe, or bound her ſoul by a bond with an oath;

11 And her huſband heard *it*, and held his peace at her, *and* diſallowed her not; then all her vows ſhall ſtand, and every bond wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

12 But if her huſband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them; then* whatſoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her ſoul, ſhall not ſtand: her huſband hath made them void; and the LORD ſhall forgive her.

13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the ſoul, her huſband may eſtabliſh it, or her huſband may make it void.

14 But if her huſband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he eſtabliſheth

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *Unto the heads*, &c.] The rulers and magiſtrates were required to make theſe laws known through their reſpective tribes.

V. 2 *If a man*, &c.] (*Notes, Lev.* xxvii.) If a man have vowed to do any thing that is ſinful in itſelf, he ſhould deeply repent of the ſin he hath committed; but no obligation can bind him to break any divine commandment. Some vows only engage for the performance of thoſe things which were previouſly our indiſpenſable duty: ſuch a vow is implied in our attendance on the Lord's table. But there are many things of a diſcretionary nature; as Jacob's vow concerning the proportion of his ſubſtance, which he would ſet apart for religious purpoſes; (*Gen.* xxviii. 22;) Paul's ſolemn determination to take nothing of the Corinthians; (2 *Cor.* xi. 9, 10;) the Nazarites vow; (vi.) the vows concerning undemanded fugitives; (xxix. 39;) and vows of abſtinence in any particular for a limited ſeaſon. Vows of this kind may on ſome occaſions be properly made: but being promiſſory oaths, they ſhould be formed with ſolemnity, and religiouſly obſerved; and the ſoul is even bound as ſurety for the performance of them.

V. 3—5.] Such things might be vowed, in the caſe here ſtated, as would both be very diſagreeable to the parent, and prejudicial to the intereſts of the family. An unmarried woman in her father's houſe was therefore commanded to notify her vows to her father: and if he did not in a little time refuſe his conſent, ſhe was bound by them; but if he did, they were diſannulled and the obligation ceaſed. If ſhe had vowed diſcreetly and properly, "ſhe had done "well that it was in her heart," and her willing mind would be accepted: if otherwiſe her fault would be forgiven.—It is queſtioned, whether minor ſons were in the ſame caſe: but it doth not appear by this law that they were; nor in any other Scripture, except it can be inferred from the fifth commandment. The males were certainly by the law allowed more liberty than the females: for the vows of the latter might be adjudged more prejudicial to families; as the ſons being more immediately under the father's tuition, would be leſs liable to be inveigled into raſh engagements of this kind.

V. 6—16.] The caſe of a married woman was the ſame; for an huſband as ſoon as he knew of his wife's vows at firſt, and afterwards ſuffered her to break them, the

iniquity

blisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: and confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*.

15 But if he shall any wise make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.

16 These *are* the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house.

iniquity would be charged on him.—With this chapter before our eyes, we may form a proper judgment of the injustice and absurdity of the vows of celibacy and chastity, which children, and even wives, have been encouraged to take, and required to observe, in the Romish church, without or against the consent of parents and husbands.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot engage our souls with too many or too strict obligations to be the Lord's, and in all things to glorify him: but we may inconsiderately vow things impracticable, inexpedient, not within our own choice, or not consistent with our relative duties. The peace, comfort, and true interest of families, and the exercise of the parental and conjugal authority, are of such consequence to communities, and to religion; that the Lord will sooner dispense with a solemn vow made to himself, than authorize any thing which interferes with them. What regard therefore should all persons, especially the inferior relations, pay to these important obligations? and how willing should they be to give up every personal inclination for the preservation of them? Blind guides indeed in all ages, by one means or other, have attempted "to make "these commandments of God of none effect, through "their traditions;" and that they might finger the *corban*, (the money given to God, and to them as his receivers,) have authorized disobedience to parents, to husbands, and to magistrates. But the whole tendency of revelation, and of the grace of God, is to induce every individual, from the highest motives, and with the greatest encouragements, to act properly in the several relations of life for the Lord's sake. We should then attend carefully to those indispensable duties, which we have engaged solemnly to perform by our very profession of Christianity; depending on, and seeking, the grace of God to enable us so to do. From the performance of these vows, no authority of husbands, parents, or magistrates can release any one; for "we must obey God rather than man." And in respect of the rest we should be cautious and circumspect, and seek counsel of the Lord in prayer: "for it is better "not to vow, than to vow and not perform." But if we have engaged our souls, let us never think of going back, when no other duty interferes, though we should have altered our mind, or become averse to the thing engaged to: for our souls are bound for the performance, and God abhors our trifling with holy and solemn matters.

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. A detachment of Israel, by divine command, attacking and destroying the Midianites, and returning with the captives and the spoil, 1—12. 2d. All the captives, except the virgins, put to death, with the purification of the warriors and the spoil, 13—24. 3d, The partition of the cattle and the captives, 25—47. 4th. The oblation of the captains and soldiers, 48—54.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

3 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *Avenge*, &c.] Vengeance belongeth to God alone, and to those whom he deputes as his ministers of vengeance. Such are magistrates in the ordinary course of his providential government; and those persons, who without commission from him dare to execute private revenge, and they, who from ambition, avarice, or resentment, wage war and desolate kingdoms, must one day answer for it. God is righteous in the miseries, which they occasion, but they are most unrighteous. If however he, (out of the ordinary method of his providence, instead of commissioning an earthquake, a pestilence, or a famine to execute vengeance upon criminals,) be pleased expressly to authorize and command any person, or people, to avenge his cause; such a commission will *justify*, nay *sanctify*, any war, massacre, or devastation. No person can at present plead such a commission; but the Israelites might, and could shew the broad seal of heaven in ratification of it, and in vindication of all they did by virtue of it. It is therefore absurd to censure *them* for the dreadful slaughter made in those wars, which we are shortly to consider; the Lord passed sentence of condemnation, and employed them merely as executioners: and unless any one can prove that the criminals did not deserve their doom; or that the Lord had no right to punish his rebellious creatures, and dispose of them and their property as he pleased; such objectors only prove their enmity to God, by being the unsolicited advocates of his enemies. The knowledge of the malignity of sin, of which men make light but which God infinitely abhors, forms the key to the understanding of all the terrible executions upon these nations which had filled up the measure of their iniquities. The whole was conducted by the express command of God; and the executioners were more than once reproved for being too lenient, but never for being too severe: yet man's natural compassion recoils at the consideration of the slaughter which was made. Hence we may draw a very forcible argument, that the execution of vengence, "in the day of wrath, and re-"velation of the righteous judgment of God," will not accord with those rules which men, ignorant of the evil of sin, and proud of their own humanity, have presumptuously devised for him; and which they would wish the Scripture to contain, though evidently contrary to the

constant

3 And Moſes ſpake unto the people, ſaying, Arm ſome of yourſelves unto the war, and let them go againſt the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

4 Of every tribe a thouſand, throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, ſhall ye ſend to the war.

5 So there were delivered out of the thouſands of Iſrael, a thouſand of *every* tribe, twelve thouſand armed for war.

6 And Moſes ſent them to the war, a thouſand of *every* tribe, them, and Phinehas the ſon of Eleazar the prieſt, to the war, with the holy inſtruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7 And they warred againſt the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moſes; and they ſlew all the males.

8 And they ſlew the kings of Midian, beſide the reſt of them that were ſlain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam alſo, the ſon of Beor, they ſlew with the ſword.

9 And the children of Iſrael took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the ſpoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly caſtles, with fire.

11 And they took all the ſpoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beaſts.

12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the ſpoil, unto Moſes, and Eleazar the prieſt, and unto the congregation of the children of Iſrael, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which *are* by Jordan *near* Jericho.

13 And Moſes, and Eleazar the prieſt, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

14 And Moſes was wrath with the officers of the hoſt, *with* the captains over thouſands, and

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conſtant tenor of their aweful language. If they cannot reconcile with their own ideas of juſtice and goodneſs the ſeverities executed upon the Midianites and Canaanites, which were only the performance of the command of a juſt and good God; let them allow that ſuch things are too high for them, and that they are not competent to determine what conduct befits the righteous Judge of the world; and that it is more ſafe, wiſe, and humble, ſimply to believe his teſtimony, and "to flee from the wrath to come," leaving the government of the univerſe to him, than raſhly to diſpute againſt ſuch matters, as are evidently out of our latitude, and of which we know nothing further than the Lord is pleaſed to inform us.—Moſes had beheld, with grief and indignation, the temptation, the ſin, and the puniſhment of Iſrael: and in directing and witneſſing the ſucceſs of this war, before his death, he ſaw a ſpecimen of the Lord's vengeance on the enemies of Iſrael, and of his kindneſs to them.

V. 3. *Avenge*, &c.] The Lord determined to take vengeance on the Midianites, for the injury which they had brought upon his people: but *they* were reminded by this language, not to indulge private reſentment, but to be influenced by zeal for the glory of God; and to engage in this war, as the miniſters of *his* vengeance upon his enemies for their ſins.

V. 4—6.] Twelve thouſand was a ſmall number, in proportion to the whole multitude of Iſrael, or to the forces with which they were to engage: but the Lord would teach them, not to truſt in an arm of fleſh, but in his Almighty power and faithful promiſe. As they were under the conduct of the captains of thouſands, and of hundreds, they probably had no general, and therefore Joſhua is not mentioned. Phinehas, the zealous avenger of the inſulted honour of God and of Iſrael (xxv.) was ordered to accompany them; *with the holy inſtruments*, by which ſome underſtand the ſilver trumpets, but others ſuppoſe that the ſecond prieſt, the High Prieſt's deputy and ſucceſſor, conſulted the Lord on ſuch occaſions, with the breaſt-plate of judgment; and that this is here meant. (*Notes, Exod.* xxviii. 15—30. *Num.* x. 1—10.)

V. 7. *They ſlew*, &c.] The victorious Iſraelites did not extirpate the nation of Midian, which ſubſiſted and was powerful long after: but they ſlew all, without giving quarter, as far as they proceeded, which probably was as far as thoſe tribes reached, from which the tempters chiefly came.

V. 8. *Balaam*, &c.] Being blinded by covetouſneſs, and hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, Balaam periſhed among the enemies of Iſrael; as ſome think he foreboded when he *wiſhed*, rather than *prayed*, "to die the death of "the righteous." (*Note*, xxv. 1. *Jude* 11.)—Whatever information Moſes might receive from human teſtimony concerning Balaam, and Balak, he doubtleſs received it more perfectly exact by inſpiration from God; and it was very proper that it ſhould be thus circumſtantially recorded, for the information, encouragement, and caution of God's people in all ages, concerning the ſecret machinations of their enemies; and on the other hand for the warning of thoſe, who unite in ſuch counſels againſt them. Thus Balaam went to his own place, as Judas did after him; and their characters in ſome reſpects greatly reſembled each other.

V. 10. *They burnt*, &c.] It ſeems that this was no part of the country which the Iſraelites were to inherit, and therefore they in this manner diſabled the Midianites from rallying their forces and renewing the war, while they executed the vengeance of the Lord upon them.

V. 14—18.]

and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

15 And Moſes ſaid unto them, Have ye ſaved all the women alive?

16 Behold, theſe cauſed the children of Iſrael, through the counſel of Balaam, to commit treſpaſs againſt the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

17 Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

18 But all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourſelves.

19 And do ye abide without the camp ſeven days: whoſoever hath killed any perſon, and whoſoever hath touched any ſlain, purify *both* yourſelves and your captives on the third day, and on the ſeventh day.

20 And purify all *your* raiment, and all that is made of ſkins, and all work of goats' *hair*, and all things made of wood.

21 And Eleazar the prieſt ſaid unto the men of war which went to the battle, This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moſes;

22 Only the gold, and the ſilver, the braſs, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye ſhall make *it* go through the fire, and it ſhall be clean; nevertheleſs, it ſhall be purified with the water of ſeparation: and all that abideth not the fire ye ſhall make go through the water.

24 And ye ſhall waſh your clothes on the ſeventh day, and ye ſhall be clean, and afterward ye ſhall come into the camp.

25 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

26 Take the ſum of the prey that was taken, *both* of man and of beaſt, thou, and Eleazar the prieſt, and the chief fathers of the congregation;

27 And divide the prey into two parts, between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation;

28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one ſoul of five hundred, *both* of the perſons, and of the beeves, and of the aſſes, and of the ſheep.

29 Take *it* of their half, and give *it* unto Eleazar the prieſt, *for* an heave-offering of the LORD.

30 And of the children of Iſrael's half thou ſhalt take one portion of fifty, of the perſons, of the beeves, of the aſſes, and of the flocks, of

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V. 14—18.] Probably the command of God had been very explicit in this particular. (1 *Sam.* xv. 3.) The ſword of war ſhould ſpare women and children, as incapable of making reſiſtance; but the *ſword of juſtice* ſhould know no diſtinction, except that of guilty or not guilty, and more or leſs guilty. This war was the execution of a righteous ſentence of condemnation upon a *guilty* nation, in which the women were the principal criminals, and the men only aiding and abetting with their counſel: and if any of the women concerned in the crime had been ſpared, they would have lived a perpetual temptation to thoſe who ſpared them. All were therefore ordered for immediate execution, but the female children, who could not be ſuppoſed to have been culpable; and who, being brought up among the Iſraelites, would never tempt them to idolatry. It has been groundleſsly aſſerted, that Moſes, by this determination, authorized the Iſraelites to make concubines of the whole number of female captives, or even promiſcuouſly to debauch them; and a formidable objection againſt his writings has been raiſed from this ſuppoſition. But the whole tenor of the law, and eſpecially a ſtatute, hereafter to be conſidered, prove the contrary. (*Deut.* xxi. 10—14.) They were merely *permitted* to poſſeſs them as female ſlaves; while all the laws concerning marriage, and concubinage, and againſt fornication and whore-

dom, were in full force in this as well as all other caſes. But what ſhall we ſay of the execution of all the male infants, who could not be perſonally guilty in this matter? A ſovereign God would have it ſo: and ſhall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Had they lived, they might have conſpired together to avenge the death of their parents on Iſrael; and the example was thus rendered more tremendous, warning parents not to imitate the guilt of the Midianites, leſt they ſhould involve their beloved offſpring in deſtruction. Throughout the Scripture men's natural affection to their children is addreſſed, by promiſes and threatenings, in which *they* alſo are included: and a future ſtate renders it poſſible for the Lord to turn the temporal ſufferings of the infants into an infinite mercy to them.

V. 19—24.] Though the Iſraelites acted by the Lord's commiſſion; yet they had been ſo much employed about the dead and dying, that they had contracted pollution: and the ſpoil, having been uſed by idolaters, and probably in idolatry, muſt be purified alſo in the preſcribed manner, which would form a pattern for ſucceeding wars. The law was thus reduced to practice, under the inſpection of the lawgiver.

V. 25—47.] To prevent diſpute, and for a rule to after times, the Lord thus ordered the diſtribution of the cattle and the female captives, betwixt the ſoldiers and the congregation; with a portion from each reſerved for the prieſts

of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD.

31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 And the booty, *being* the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep,

33 And threescore and twelve thousand beeves,

34 And threescore and one thousand asses,

35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.

36 And the half, *which was* the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep:

37 And the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen.

38 And the beeves *were* thirty and six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and twelve.

39 And the asses *were* thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and one.

40 And the persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty and two persons.

41 And Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORD's heave-offering unto Eleazar the priest; as the LORD commanded Moses.

42 And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred,

43 (Now the half *that pertained unto* the congregation, was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep,

44 And thirty and six thousand beeves,

45 And thirty thousand asses and five hundred,

46 And sixteen thousand persons,)

47 Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, *both* of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

48 And the officers which *were* over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses:

49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which *are* under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.

50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD.

51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, *even* all wrought jewels.

52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.

53 (*For* the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)

54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, *for* a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

CHAP.

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and Levites. The whole seems to have been very equitable, and to have given universal satisfaction. The number of the female captives, who were spared, suggests an awful idea of the terrible vengeance, which God took upon the enemies of him, and of his people! Amalek, who first warred with Israel, was long spared; but Midian, who first tempted them to idolatry, was speedily and severely punished!

V. 48—54.] The success of the warriors had been very extraordinary; so small a company overcoming, and cutting off such immense multitudes, and taking so large a spoil: but their preservation was still more remarkable; not one individual being slain, or missing, or even wounded, that we find! In acknowledgment of the Lord's special kindness in this encouraging instance, the officers, in the name of the soldiers also, presented the gold, (all of it probably,) which they had found amongst the spoil, as an oblation to the Lord, "to make an atonement for their souls;" (*Exod.* xxx. 12, 15, 16;) that is, to be employed in that service of God, by which atonement was *typically* made. And thus they confessed, that instead of claiming a reward for their service, they needed forgiveness of much that had been amiss; and desired to be thankful for the preservation of their lives, which might justly have been taken away.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

"The triumphing of the wicked is short." The pleasures and advantages of sin are bought at an enormous price, and the vengeance of the Lord is always sure, righteous,

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1st. The petition of the tribes of Reuben and Gad for a settlement east of Jordan, 1—5. 2d. Moses suspecting some ill intention, and sharply remonstrating with them, 6—15. 3d. Their explanation and engagements; and the conditional grant made to them, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, of the conquests on that side of Jordan; upon which they rebuilded the cities, 16—42.

NOW the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle;

2 The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

4 *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle.

5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jordan.

6 And

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righteous, and terrible, and sometimes very speedy and sudden.—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of "the living God;" and if his temporal judgments be so dreadful, what will be the case of sinners, "when the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with flaming "fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?" (2 *Thess.* i. 8, 9.) Let us then take warning, and "flee "from the wrath to come," to that Saviour who alone is able to deliver us: and, depending on his assistance, let us declare war against every sinful propensity, by which we have been induced to dishonour God, and bring guilt and misery upon ourselves.—This is the genuine holy war, in which we must utterly destroy every one of the enemies of the Lord, and of our souls, or they will certainly destroy us: to this the trumpet of the gospel excites and encourages us; and in it we may depend upon the Lord for counsel and assistance. Here we should indulge the deepest resentment; and, without thought of peace or truce, should prosecute the quarrel to the utter extermination of our enemies, root and branch, with unrelenting severity, neither sparing our strongest, nor overlooking our feeblest, lusts, which, if not crucified, will soon become formidable and produce fatal effects.—In this, and in all our undertakings, we must not only make the Lord our confidence, but adhere to his orders and instructions; and in so doing we may expect all desirable success, notwithstanding interposing difficulties.—Though we must forgive and pray for all our enemies; yet we should entertain the deepest abhorrence of the conduct, and most carefully shun the company of those who have once attempted to draw us into sin by any persuasion or allurement whatsoever. Nor will any persons be more severely punished by the Lord, than such tempters of others, especially of his people; except it be those, who, against the convictions of their own conscience, have counselled and encouraged them so to do.—There is no *natural* disposition of the human heart, in it's present fallen state, that is not capable of being perverted and running into excess; and our humanity and compassion, as well as our resentment, must be regulated and moderated according to the law of God; or we shall spare, connive at, and encourage those, whom the Lord would have reproved, corrected, or treated with severity, and thus bring anger from him upon ourselves. This is especially the case with magistrates, ministers, heads of families, and those who are intrusted with any authority.—They, who have been faithful in inferior stations, may expect to be employed in more important services: but even when we have acquitted ourselves suitably in those things which were our bounden duty, we shall need purifying, in the blood of Christ and by his sanctifying grace, from the guilt and pollution adhering to our best performances.—God so abhors, and would have us to abhor, the commission of murder; that he hath represented even that bloodshed, which he authorized and commanded, as in some degree contaminating those concerned in it; (1 *Chron.* xxii. 8.) He also approves and requires exact equity in all our transactions; nor should we dare to appropriate any gain, of which we cannot conscientiously devote a portion to that God who "hates robbery for burnt-offering," and for which we cannot thank Him as the giver. This rule, if well observed, would render us incapable of making gain by fraud, extortion, oppression, or any kind of iniquity or sinful compliances. But besides the exact rules of honesty, we should liberally give to the Lord, and dispose of in pious and charitable uses, a proportion of all our acquisitions; especially when commemorating special deliverances: and though the blood of Christ has made the effectual atonement for our souls, such oblations are proper evidences of our faith, and of the sincerity of our love; and are acknowledgments of our unworthiness of all our mercies; of our gratitude to the bountiful giver of them, of our zeal for his glory; and of love to our fellow-Christians.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1—5.] This proposal of the Reubenites and Gadites seemed to imply a disregard to the land of Canaan, a distrust of the Lord's promise, and a reluctancy to encounter the difficulties and face the dangers of conquering and expelling the inhabitants of that land. When we compare their petition, "not to be brought "over Jordan," with the earnestness with which Moses intreated to pass over, we cannot but suspect, that they did not behold in the rest of Canaan that type of heaven, which he and other believers seem to have done. They were not, however, so criminal as Moses thought them; and it was proper that this part of the country should be allotted

6 And Moſes ſaid unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and ſhall ye ſit here?

7 And wherefore diſcourage ye the heart of the children of Iſrael from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

8 Thus did your fathers, when I ſent them from Kadeſh-barnea to ſee the land.

9 For when they went up into the valley of Eſhcol, and ſaw the land, they diſcouraged the heart of the children of Iſrael, that they ſhould not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

10 And the LORD's anger was kindled the ſame time, and ſware, ſaying,

11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, ſhall ſee the land which I ſware unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob; becauſe they have not wholly followed me;

12 Save Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

13 And the LORD's anger was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he made them wander in the wilderneſs forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the ſight of the LORD was conſumed.

14 And, behold, ye are riſen up in your fathers' ſtead, an increaſe of ſinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Iſrael.

15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderneſs, and ye ſhall deſtroy all this people.

16 And they came near unto him, and ſaid, We will build ſheep-folds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones;

17 But we ourſelves will go ready armed before the children of Iſrael, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones ſhall dwell in the fenced cities, becauſe of the inhabitants of the land.

18 We will not return unto our houſes, until the children of Iſrael have inherited every man his inheritance:

19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder ſide Jordan, or forward; becauſe our inheritance is fallen to us on this ſide Jordan eaſtward.

20 And Moſes ſaid unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22 And the land be ſubdued before the LORD; then afterward ye ſhall return, and be guiltleſs before the LORD, and before Iſrael; and this land ſhall be your poſſeſſion before the LORD.

23 But if ye will not do ſo, behold, ye have ſinned againſt the LORD: and be ſure your ſin will find you out.

24 Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your ſheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, Thy ſervants will do as my lord commandeth.

26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, ſhall be there in the cities of Gilead.

27 But thy ſervants will paſs over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord ſaith.

28 So concerning them Moſes commanded Eleazar the prieſt, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Iſrael;

29 And Moſes ſaid unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will paſs with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD, and the land ſhall be ſubdued before you; then ye ſhall give them the land of Gilead for a poſſeſſion:

30 But

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allotted to ſome of the tribes. In their too great haſte for a ſettlement they petitioned for it, and obtained it: but it was a ſituation very diſtant from the ſanctuary; it greatly interrupted their intercourſe with their brethren: it was very much expoſed to their enemies, and uneaſy to themſelves; and they ſeem to have been diſpoſſeſſed

ſooner than the other Iſraelites; (2 *Kings*, x. 32, 33, 1 *Chron.* v. 25, 26.)

V. 15. *And ye*, &c.] Moſes feared that this example of unbelief and timidity, (for ſo he thought it,) would lead the congregation into a general imitation of the ſin of their fathers, to *their* deſtruction likewiſe.

V. 33,

30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you, in the land of Canaan.

31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan *may be* our's.

33 And Moses gave unto them, *even* to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof, in the coasts, *even* the cities of the country round about.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

35 And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

36 And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities; and folds for sheep.

37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,

38 And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which *was* in it.

40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small villages thereof, and called them Havoth-jair.

42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

CHAP.

V. 33. *And*, &c.] The country east-ward of Jordan was it seems deemed too large a proportion for those two tribes alone: in consequence therefore of the conquest of Gilead by the descendents of Machir, a division of the tribe of Manasseh had their inheritance there also; probably by their own consent.

V. 38. *Their names being changed*, &c.] When the people rebuilt the cities for their own habitations, they changed the names of such of them, as were called after the idols of the former inhabitants. (*Note*, *Exod.* xxiii. 13.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Covetousness, pride, conveniency, impatience, or other carnal inducements, principally influence most men in the choice of their worldly settlements: whereas they ought to consider in the first place, whether they are likely to be advantageous to their souls, convenient for attendance on God's ordinances, and favourable to communion with his people. But if any true Christians are betrayed into such an improper conduct, their iniquity will certainly correct them, and their continual uneasiness will make them smart for their folly. (*Notes*, &c. *Gen.* xiii. xiv.)—We need not wonder indeed that mankind in general act in this manner: they have not that faith which explores the unseen world, nor that spiritual mind which supremely values heavenly blessings; the attainment of which is supposed to be attended with present loss and trouble, the possession future if not uncertain. Earthly things suit their carnal minds, and form a present portion apprehended by the senses; and that they make choice of; but it proves unsatisfactory and vexatious: they are speedily driven out of it, and having no inheritance beyond the grave, they will have eternally to bewail their wretched choice, whilst believers eternally rejoice in their portion.—But leaving this obvious accommodation; let us observe that we are utterly inexcusable, if we do not profit by the examples of them, whose sins and punishments are recorded for our warning. Yet so depraved is human nature, that one generation rises up after another, "an increase of sinful men" walking in the steps of those who perished before them, and thus still more and more augmenting the fierce anger of the Lord. Nor does the wickedness of men, (especially under a profession of religion,) only destroy their own souls: it also murders the souls of others; whilst their examples, influence, and persuasions, encourage them in sin, or discourage them from seeking and serving the Lord; or whilst their crimes increase their prejudices or harden their heart against the gospel of salvation. Yet they, who are deeply acquainted with the wickedness of the human heart, and have been long conversant with perverse and rebellious people, are sometimes too suspicious. But if, out of zeal for the glory of God, and solicitude for the welfare of his people, such suspicions are entertained, it is generally best to disclose them, and to remonstrate with the suspected persons: this may either withdraw them from their purpose; or give them an opportunity of clearing up matters, by such explanations as place things in a more favourable light. These should be willingly listened unto: and though there be somewhat culpable, we should not make the worst of every thing; but be ready to accept of reasonable excuses, and to accede to equitable proposals: this however should always be done with such express conditions and limitations, as may supersede occasions of future contention. All men ought to consider the interests of others, as well as their own accommodation: and the law of love requires them reciprocally to labour, venture, and suffer for each other as occasion requires. But especially it is becoming in the professed people of God to be thus disinterested and public-spirited: and they cannot consistently account any thing too great to forego, to endure, or to attempt, in opposing

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1st, A record of the encampments of Israel from Egypt to the borders of Canaan, 1—49. *2d, Rules concerning the division of the land; and a charge to destroy idolaters and idolatry from that promised inheritance, with the certain consequences of neglecting this injunction.—(Notes, &c. Exod.* xii—xvii. xix. 1, 2. *Numb.* x. xi. 34, 35. xx. xxi.)—50—56.

THESE *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt, with their armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

2 And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and these *are* their journeys according to their goings out.

3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month: on the morrow after the passover, the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

4 (For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.)

5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth.

6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which *is* in the edge of the wilderness.

7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again into Pi-hahiroth, which *is* before Baal-zephon; and they pitched before Migdol.

8 And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

9 And they removed from Marah and came unto Elim: and in Elim *were* twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees; and they pitched there.

10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.

11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.

12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.

13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.

14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.

17 And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.

18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched at Rithmah.

19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez.

20 And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.

21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah.

22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah.

23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher.

24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.

27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.

28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched at Mithcah.

29 And

posing the common enemies of the cause, in promoting the salvation of souls, and in securing to their brethren also the heavenly inheritance. If God hath formed us to this disposition, we shall endeavour to avoid all appearance of evil, shall do all in equity and love; shall have a sanctified and comfortable use of our worldly possessions, and shall so pass through things temporal, as not finally lose the good things which are eternal.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXIII.] It is very useful to record at large the principal matters of our own experience, and of God's dealings with his church: and the frequent perusal of such records will be found very profitable, both to awaken our gratitude, to renew our repentance and humiliation, and to encourage our faith and hope in God.—Few of the periods of our lives can be reflected on, without remind-

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29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.

30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.

31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaaken.

32 And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad.

33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah.

34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.

35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber.

36 And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh.

37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor, at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first *day* of the fifth month.

39 And Aaron *was* an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah.

42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.

43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab.

45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad.

46 And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim.

47 And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho.

49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth *even* unto Abel-shittim, in the plains of Moab.

50 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places.

53 And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

54 And ye shall divide the land by lot for an

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ing us of the Lord's goodness, and of our own ingratitude and disobedience: these, like a double thread, seem to run entwined together through the whole of our experience: and the contrast illustrates both; our unworthiness rendering the kindness of God the more admirable, his kindness rendering our sins more inexcuseable. We could not reasonably wish to travel over again any of the stages through which we have passed; except we could hope by the grace of God to shun the sins which we then committed, or to embrace those opportunities of glorifying God and doing good, which before we slipped. But if we are upright in such desires, they shall be graciously accepted; and we may be thankful, that we have travelled thus far on our pilgrimage to a better country: we may set up our Ebenezer, and praise him, who hath helped us hitherto, and trust in him to bring us safe to our journey's end.—But whatever be our character and state, every day, week, month, and year, whether prosperous or adverse, bears us forward to our long home; and conveys the unbeliever nearer to the gates of hell, the believer nearer to the joys of heaven: and not only those days, which are marked for some important transaction or event, but those which glide away unnoticed and are speedily forgotten.—Soon will our wanderings end, and our eternal state be irrevocably fixed: how important then is the present moment!—Happy are they whom the Lord now guides with his counsel, and will at length receive to his glory! To this felicity the gospel calls us: "Behold now is the accepted "time, behold now is the day of salvation!"—Let sinners seize the precious opportunity, and flee for refuge to the hope set before them. Let us all behold with trembling and keep at a distance from the *graves of the lusters*; let us fear the doom of the unbelievers, concerning whom the "Lord sware in his wrath, that they should not enter into "his rest:" let us shun the *Meribahs* and *Massahs*, at which so many have perished in their murmurings and rebellions. Let us rather prefer the bitter waters of *Marah*, sweetened with the consolations of the gospel. Let us not

an inheritance among your families, *and* to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's *inheritance* shall be in the place where his lot falleth: according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

53 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them *shall be* pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

56 Moreover, it shall come pass, *that* I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st, The boundaries of Canaan, 1—15. 2d, Persons nominated to superintend the division of it, 16—29.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan, (this *is* the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, *even* the land of Canaan, with the coasts thereof,)

3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin, along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward.

4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon.

5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

6 And *as for* the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.

7 And this shall be your north border; from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor.

8 From mount Hor ye shall point out *your border* unto the entrance of Hamath: and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad.

9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border.

10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham.

11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward.

12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land, with the coasts thereof round about.

13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the land which ye shall

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not loiter in our journey, nor think of returning to Egypt, nor fear interposing enemies, difficulties, or death itself. Let us but redeem our time, to glorify God, and serve our generation, and he will carry us safe through all to his eternal kingdom.—But except we separate from sinners, avoid occasions of evil, and crucify our lusts, we must perish: and if we shew any quarter to our sinful propensities, they will gather strength by indulgence, spoil the comfort of our lives, and perhaps "be pricks in our eyes, and "thorns in our sides," when we lie upon a death bed.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 3—12.] It was absolutely necessary that the boundaries of the land of Canaan should be exactly ascertained; as the Israelites were commissioned and commanded to dispossess and extirpate the inhabitants of that district: but they must not pretend to push their conquest any further, at *that time*, or *in the same manner*; though it was the divine purpose, by various concurrent circumstances, at length to put them in possession of much more extensive territories. (*Gen.* xv. 18. 2 *Sam.* viii. 3-8. 1 *Kings*, iv. 21. 24. 2 *Chron.* ix. 26.) Without aiming at exactness we may observe, that from the southern extremity of the Dead sea to the river near the entrance of Egypt; and thence by the banks of the Mediterranean sea, and across the country near mount Libanus; and so round by the lake of Tiberias, or sea of Chinnereth, the river Jordan, and the Dead sea, to the southern extremity before mentioned, formed a country not more than one hundred and sixty miles long, and about fifty broad. The mount Hor, here mentioned, was on the northern end of the land, far distant from mount Hor where Aaron died. Though in the days of David and Solomon their dominion extended much farther than the limits here assigned; yet the Israelites scarcely ever actually possessed the whole of this small country: for neglecting the warning given in the former chapter, the ancient inhabitants continued to be very troublesome inmates with them from age to age.—The Dead sea, on which this pleasant land bordered, having been once a still more fertile country, might be an useful lesson to them, to shun those sins which brought such a dreadful judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah: the wilderness would call to their remembrance their wanderings, rebellions, and mercies there; and the border of [illegible] might remind them, that "they had been bondmen, but that the Lord their "God had redeemed them." Some consider Jordan, as reviving the recollection of the Lord's faithfulness in

shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe.

14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad, according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance*, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance.

15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan *near* Jericho, eastward, toward the sun-rising.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 These *are* the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun.

18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance.

19 And the names of the men *are* these: Of the tribe of Judah; Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.

20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon; Shemuel the son of Ammihud.

21 Of the tribe of Benjamin; Elidad the son of Chislon.

22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son Jogli.

23 The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh; Hanniel the son of Ephod.

24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim; Kemuel the son of Shiphtan.

25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun; Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar; Paltiel the son of Azzan.

27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher; Ahihud the son of Shelomi.

28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali; Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

29 These *are they* whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1st. The allotment of forty-eight cities with their suburbs to the tribe of Levi, 1—8. 2d. The cities of refuge appointed, with their use; and some laws respecting murder and man-slaughter, 9—34.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

2 Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of

in the end of their wanderings; and the great sea, and Lebanon, as emblems of eternity, into which they must shortly enter: but these are not equally obvious, and seem only devised to render the other *mementos* complete.

V. 29. *These are they*, &c.] This appointment was an assurance given of conquest to Israel; and to the persons nominated, of preservation from the sword, and from natural death, during the wars. The true Christian soldier fights, encouraged with the assurance given him of victory through the power of Christ. The tribes are here named in different order than before, and nearly in the same arrangement in which their inheritance was allotted them in Canaan: hence it has been supposed, that Moses was led by divine inspiration thus to arrange them, as referring to that event; seeing that was directed by *lot*, and not by the appointment of men.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though a comparatively small part of the earth falls to the share of the Lord's people, yet are they said to *inherit* the earth; because "a little, that the righteous hath, is "better than the riches of many wicked;" more comfortable, and more profitable. For the bounds of their habitation, and the measure of their provision, are so assigned them by the only wise God in tender love, as best tends to forward their salvation; and the increase of grace and peace in their souls. As their provision is generally small, so have their numbers been hitherto few in the comparison; and they have commonly been despised and neglected by the multitude of the turbulent and wicked of the world, being a quiet and peaceable people. But the eye of the Lord is upon them, "his name is their strong "tower;" he knoweth what things they have need of, and hath reserved for them a more enduring inheritance in heaven, and they are kept by his power through faith unto that salvation. May we have our inheritance among them, and not covet riches, or seek, in any improper way, to increase that temporal portion which the Lord allots us: may we be careful not to live beneath our privileges, through sloth, or indulgence of those lusts which mar our spiritual comforts: may we have our names written in the book of life, and have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, as an assurance of victory and eternal life; and when our warfare is ended, may we have an inheritance allotted us in heaven, by Jesus, the Prince of all the tribes of the redeemed, to our everlasting and complete satisfaction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 2—5.] These cities were designed, not only for the accommodation of the priests and Levites, but for their distribution as religious instructors in the several parts of the land; that they might have the be-

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of their poſſeſſions cities to dwell in; and ye ſhall give *alſo* unto the Levites ſuburbs for the cities round about them.

3 And the cities ſhall they have to dwell in, and the ſuburbs of them ſhall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beaſts.

4 And the ſuburbs of the cities which ye ſhall give unto the Levites, *ſhall reach* from the wall of the city and outward, a thouſand cubits round about.

5 And ye ſhall meaſure from without the city on the eaſt ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the ſouth ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the weſt ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the north ſide two thouſand cubits; and the city *ſhall be* in the midſt: this ſhall be to them the ſuburbs of the cities.

6 And among the cities which ye ſhall give unto the Levites *there ſhall be* ſix cities for refuge, which ye ſhall appoint for the manſlayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye ſhall add forty and two cities.

7 *So* all the cities which ye ſhall give to the Levites *ſhall be* forty and eight cities: them *ſhall ye give* with their ſuburbs.

8 And the cities which ye ſhall give *ſhall be* of the poſſeſſion of the children of Iſrael: from *them that have* many ye ſhall give many; but from *them that have* few ye ſhall give few: every one ſhall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.

9 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

10 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

11 Then ye ſhall appoint you cities to be cities

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nefit of much conference with each other, and conveniently go to the adjacent towns and villages, or receive thoſe who thence reſorted to them for inſtruction. For, though the *typical* temple-ſervice was limited to one place; the preaching of the word of God, with prayer and praiſe, was not thus confined, but might be attended to any where, with reference to the appointed ſacrifices and prieſthood, and to the ark of the covenant. Thus the curſe pronounced on Levi (*Gen.* xlix. 7,) was turned into a bleſſing, both to them, and to Iſrael in general. Theſe cities ſeem to have been like our market-towns, and very numerous in that populous and fruitful country. The ſuburb neareſt the city would ſerve for gardens and outhouſes; the larger ſuburb at a greater diſtance would yield paſture for the flocks. The whole reached to nearly a mile on every ſide of each city: and though this, with the tithes and other perquiſites, would be a very plentiful proviſion for this ſmall tribe, we never find that it was complained of by the people as exorbitant.

V. 11—15.] In order to expreſs the greater abhorrence of murder, and to provide the more effectually for the puniſhment of the murderer, the proſecution and execution of the criminal cuſtomarily devolved upon the neareſt relation, under the title of *the avenger of blood*; who in notorious caſes might purſue him any whither, and execute vengeance without the formalities of a trial. Yet we muſt ſuppoſe that this was only, when the manſlayer was *certainly known*; and if the avenger of blood raſhly ſlew the wrong perſon, he muſt doubtleſs anſwer for it: for we cannot ſuppoſe that an individual was allowed to put a man to death upon mere ſuſpicion, when the magiſtrates or congregation might not proceed without two poſitive witneſſes to the fact; (ſee *Deut.* xvii. 6.) This cuſtom however, under certain limitations, was ſanctioned by the divine law: but an equitable proviſion was made for the ſecurity of thoſe who *unintentionally* ſhed blood. Six cities were appointed in different parts of the land, to which they might

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flee for refuge, and be ſafe, until a fair trial, whether they had been guilty of murder or not. Some one of theſe cities would lie within half a day's journey of every part of the land. It would rarely occur that the avenger of blood would be on the ſpot, at the time when the accident happened; and none elſe had a right to aſſault or detain the man-ſlayer, at leaſt if no malicious intention was manifeſted. Theſe unhappy men would therefore generally get the ſtart of their adverſaries, and very few of them would be overtaken before they gained the place of refuge. But then they muſt leave their families, employments, and all their moſt important intereſts, and deareſt comforts behind: they muſt not loiter, nor yield to wearineſs, nor regard difficulties, nor at all ſlacken their pace, till they had got ſafe within the walls of the appointed city; which ſecured them in virtue of the divine inſtitution, not by its own natural ſtrength.—To forward thoſe who thus fled for their life, the Jewiſh writers inform us, that the road to thoſe cities was always preſerved in good repair, and way-poſts inſcribed REFUGE were placed wherever they were needful, that they might not ſo much as heſitate for a moment. In this refuge they had no occaſion to fear their accuſers, but might boldly meet them; they had the benefit of a trial, and if acquitted from the charge of murder, were protected from the avenger of blood: yet they muſt continue in the city, and not far from its borders; for if they did the avenger might ſlay them with impunity. Thus they were priſoners at large, but well provided for; and as all theſe cities of refuge were ſelected from among thoſe which belonged to the Levites, they would enjoy the benefit of their converſe, counſel, and inſtructions, whilſt debarred from going up to the temple. Their confinement continued until the death of the high prieſt, when the public loſs, and the grief occaſioned by it, were ſuppoſed to ſwallow up all their perſonal ſorrows; and they were then permitted to return to their former poſſeſſions. In this equitable and ſalutary law we have an eminent type

cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.

12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

13 And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge.

14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, *which* shall be cities of refuge.

15 These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them; that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

16 And if he smite him with an instrument of

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of the salvation of the *gospel*. Our sins have provoked the vengeance of our offended God, who by innumerable instruments is continually executing justice upon criminals, and by death conveying them away to everlasting punishment. But in infinite mercy he hath provided a Refuge to which we may flee and be safe; even Christ Jesus, in his glorious person, his mediatorial office, his merits, and grace. The holy law of God declaring his will, and denouncing his wrath against every transgressor, with salutary terror proclaims our danger, and "warns us to flee "from the wrath to come;" the gospel points out "Christ "as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that "believeth:" his ministers are appointed to declare them both, and by all needful instructions, exhortations, and encouragements, to make the way plain to every enquirer. The sinner, who is made *really sensible* of his urgent danger, and perceives by faith the distant Refuge, will make no more delay; will leave all behind, even his choicest comforts and most valued temporal interests; will disregard all intervening opposition; will not be bribed, amused, or persuaded to loiter, to turn back, or to stop short; but "will "count all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of "Christ," "that he may win him, and be *found in him*." The cry of vengeance sounds in his affrighted ears; the sword of justice is behind him; and if death should seize him, ere his sins are washed away in the blood of Christ, his everlasting destruction is inevitable: his all is at stake, and he cannot but attend to this "one thing needful." Thus "he flees for refuge to lay hold on the hope set be-"fore him," and Christ takes him under his own protection: the law is magnified and justice satisfied by his obedience unto death; the offender is justified by God himself, and who shall lay any thing to his charge? "there is "no condemnation for him, he being in Christ Jesus:" in him he still abides, and is safe, until in virtue of the death of the anointed High Priest, he is in due time restored to his forfeited inheritance. (25.) This part of the type had a peculiar significance, before the coming of Christ, whose death is the purchase of our security, of our present comforts, and of our future inheritance. But though the most atrocious offender, whether Jew or Gentile, as well as those who have sinned most ignorantly, may come to Christ and find salvation; yet for him that cometh "he will in no wise cast out:" yet the presumptuous sinner neglects, the hypocrite abides, and the apostate renounces this safeguard, and their deeper condemnation, whilst multitudes, who are alarmed at the danger, are ashamed by mistimed delay, by cleaving to some earthly object, by preferring some self-invented refuge to this which Christ has provided for sinners.

[V. 16—25.] The distinction here made is not between

sudden anger and malice *prepense* (which latter is indeed an aggravation of murder, but not essential to the crime;) but between *intentionally* striking a man with any weapon likely to cause death, and an *unintentional* blow. In the latter case alone the city of refuge afforded a man protection. And of this the congregation, by the appointed magistrates, were authorized to judge.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The provision, that God hath appointed for his ministers, was not intended to pamper them in pride, luxury, sloth, or any kind of self-indulgence; by which they would be disqualified for, and led to dislike and despise, their work: but to free them from distracting care; and to leave them at leisure, that they might be wholly employed in the important duties of their station, and avail themselves of every opportunity of conciliating by acts of kindness the good-will of the people, and attention to their instructions. So that the grant and the effect of it when properly used, were intended *ultimately* and *mainly* for the advantage of those who bestowed, not of those who received it. But we need not wonder if the sinfulness of man's heart pervert the wisest constitutions, human and divine: and if the abuse made by some, afford others a plausible pretext for neglecting their duty. This however must not be thus dispensed with; though they who furnish the excuse have the deeper guilt.—It is very profitable for the ministers of the gospel to confer frequently together for their mutual encouragement, admonition, and instruction, to increase mutual love, and to give younger ministers the opportunity of profiting by the knowledge, experience, and observations of their seniors; but *above all* that they may pray much together, for each other *personally*, for a blessing on each other's labours, for the success of the word, and for the spread of the gospel in every place. And when, with this advantage, a convenient situation for access to a number of willing hearers can be obtained, a minister of Christ has abundant reason for content and thankfulness.—In the maintenance of the ministry, in the support of divine worship, in the provision for the poor, or in any other good work, equality and proportion should be considered, both by those who contribute, and those who receive: for that donation is *liberality* in some, which is shamefully scanty in those of superior affluence.—It is very important in the administration of justice, that the guilty should not escape, and that the innocent should not suffer: and though the prosecution and execution of criminals be painful, and in many cases an odious employment; yet it must be done, and becomes a necessary duty in some persons who should be guided, in it, by regard to public justice and the safety of society. This is especially the case

of iron, (so that he die,) he *is* a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, (wherewith he may die,) and he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

18 Or *if* he smite him with an hand-weapon of wood, (wherewith he may die,) and he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him he shall slay him.

20 But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait that he die;

21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote *him* shall surely be put to death; *for* he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him.

22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait;

23 Or with any stone wherewith a man may die, seeing *him* not, and cast *it* upon him that he die, and *was* not his enemy, neither sought his harm:

24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments;

25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;

27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:

28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

29 So these *things* shall be for a statute of judgment unto you, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person *to cause him* to die.

31 Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which *is* guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.

33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*; for blood it defileth the land: and the

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case with murder, in all its forms and under all disguises; which so pollutes the land, that nothing but the blood of the murderer, whatever be his rank or quality, can cleanse it. Alas! that such unscriptural and absurd distinctions, and concessions to the maxims of proud ungodly men, should cause so many atrocious murders to pass unpunished; the guilt of which, with incumbent and accumulating weight will, 'tis seriously to be apprehended, help to sink this nation into destruction: this nation, which hath so long been favoured in a peculiar manner in God's providence, and where he hath so long dwelt by his word and ordinances; but which a torrent of infidelity, profaneness, and licentiousness, deluging all before them, evidently marks to be ripening apace for ruin: except in answer to the prayers of his remnant of despised people, "the "Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against them." Let us all then with one consent present our supplications in behalf of our beloved country, that reformation, and a general revival of pure religion, may avert the judgments of God.—The restrictions, dangers, and inconveniences, which [illegible] bloodshed occasioned, should impress us with horror of the thought of even rashly occasioning death; and increase our caution and circumspection, as well as watchfulness over our passions, and our earnestness in praying to be preserved from such a calamity. But above all let sinners take warning without delay to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, whatever they renounce, venture, and suffer; let them not stop short, turn back, or loiter; let them not fear a repulse; for the refuge is appointed for the purpose of receiving all such, as are sensible of their danger, and flee to it, how vile soever they have been. Let them abide in the continued exercise of a believing dependence on, and a thankful obedience to, him who died for sinners and rose again: let them only be careful that they abuse not this refuge by encouraging themselves in presumptuous unrepented sin: and let them wait the appointed time, and they shall certainly at length be restored to liberty, and reinstated in their forfeited inheritance. May the Lord grant that neither the writer, nor any of the readers, may be "of those, who draw back "unto perdition!" but that we all may be "of those, who "believe to the saving of the soul!"

NOTES.

the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Contains, 1st. A difficulty proposed and resolved, concerning the daughters of Zelophehad 1—9. 2d. Their consequent conduct, 10—13.

AND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel;

2 And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel; then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

6 This *is* the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from *one* tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:

11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons.

12 *And*

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI.] V. 1—12.] It does not appear that Manasseh left any son but Machir, or Machir any son but Gilead; from whose posterity, in different families, this whole numerous tribe had sprung. To one division of it a portion had been assigned east of Jordan; (xxvi. 28—34. xxxii. 40. *Joshua* xiii. 31. 1 *Chron.* ii. 21—23:) but the division Zelophehad had belonged to, is supposed to have been that, to which an inheritance was afterwards allotted west of Jordan; yet, in expectation of being put in possession according to promise, the elders of the Manassites here propose a difficulty, which had occurred to them upon the adjudged case of Zelophehad's daughters, (xxvii.) If the females should inherit, in default of male issue, those lands which were divided to the tribes by lot; by intermarrying with other tribes, they would diminish the interest and weaken the influence of their own tribes, and give occasion to much future confusion, and perhaps contention, among their posterity about their inheritances. The settling of this matter they referred to Moses, without giving any opinion of their own: and he, by the authority of God, annexed a clause, which would effectually keep the tribes and inheritances distinct, as long as it was observed. Heiresses were not allowed to marry out of their own tribe, though within those bounds they might consult their own inclinations. Probably there had been some prospect of Zelophehad's daughters marrying into another tribe; as both their character and expected inheritance would induce such overtures: but when the will of God was declared, all parties acquiesced, and they were married to their own cousins; not out of necessity, for there were many thousands within the assigned limits; but out of choice and preference, and perhaps because they were the next heirs of the family: and we may hence learn that there is nothing at all improper in such marriages, whatever has been groundlessly supposed.

12 *And* they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 These *are* the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel, in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No laws, however excellent, express, or numerous, can reach in their application, to every particular case which may arise: but still room will be left for the exercise of sound judgment and common sense. When these are regulated according to the spirit of the word of God, and in submission to and dependence on divine teaching, they will guide us through the various perplexities that may occur, as far as our immediate duty is concerned. But the Lord frequently leaves us to feel our difficulties, that we may be habituated to reflect, and led to trust in him more entirely to guide us through and extricate us out of them, for his glory and for our good.—All our intentions and inclinations ought to be subjected to the will of God, when made known to us: and especially in contracting marriage, future consequences to posterity, as well to ourselves and our connections, ought to be taken into consideration.—Though the word of God supposes that esteem, affection, and preference are requisite in this important relation: yet it knows nothing of that irrational, ungovernable, and idolatrous passion, which regardless of all consequences, and in defiance of all authority, rushes headlong upon gratification; which is neither moderated by discretion, nor subornated to the will of God; which is not rational esteem, tender friendship, or congenial affection, but somewhat vastly more rapturous, unintelligible, and undefinable; and which, with all it's refinements, is inconsistent with common sense, the interests of society, the happiness of the marriage-relation, and the Christian religion.—Finally, though it be prudent to foresee and prevent disputes about temporal property; yet it would be better for us, if we were equally quick-sighted and attentive to our spiritual and eternal interests. But "the children of this world are "wiser in their generation than the children of light." (*Luke*, xvi. 8.)

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED DEUTERONOMY.

The name of this book, given it, as those of the former books, were, by the Greek translators, signifies a repetition of the law, *and in some measure expresses the nature of it. For many of the former laws are here repeated, some of them with further explanations, and all of them with application to the heart and conscience, by pathetic exhortations, persuasions, and expostulations: and therefore the addresses are not generally prefaced with "The Lord "spake unto Moses, &c." but Moses is introduced* preaching *to the people from the former revelations of the Lord's will. The most important parts of the foregoing history are also rehearsed, with enlargements, illustrations, practical inferences, and observations. Many precepts, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, not before given, are subjoined, with other entirely new matter, historical, prophetical and poetical. The repetitions were very proper to a new generation of men; and the application of them, both by word of mouth and by writing, was of vast importance, and could not fail to make a deep and durable impression on the minds of the people: and it is an honourable circumstance respecting this book, that all those Scriptures, with which Jesus Christ repelled Satan's temptations, were taken from it. The beginning of the book may be dated rather more than a month before the death of Moses, and it contains the history of what he knew would be the conclusion of his life, and therefore it may be said to comprise his last dying words to Israel. The most remarkable circumstances are, the activity and fervency of Moses, in his zeal for the glory of God, and his affection for Israel, at the close of his life: and the variety of methods which he was inspired of God to employ, in order to leave an impression upon the minds of the people, when he should be taken from them. After having reminded them of the commandments of God, and enforced obedience with immense pathos and enlargement of heart, from every motive imaginable; he set before them the consequences of their conduct in a long catalogue of important blessings and awful curses; and*

orders were given that some of them should be afterwards ratified, and as it were subscribed to, in a singular manner from mount Ebal and Gerizzim; and which, as prophecies have been fulfilling to this present day, in a most extraordinary manner. He then formed the substance of all his warnings and exhortations into a sacred song, which he communicated to them: and finally, having pronounced prophetical blessings upon the tribes of Israel, and given encouragement to Joshua his successor, he ascended mount Pisgah, viewed the promised land, and died; being buried by God himself, and lamented by Israel for thirty days. Such are the general out-lines of this book; the whole of which shews Moses's entire forgiveness of, and disinterested love for, Israel; and marks him an eminent type of Jesus Christ: it also manifests the Lord's entire reconciliation to the people after all their rebellions. And as the whole of the transactions here recorded must have been exceedingly useful to the Israelites; so will the perusal of them at this distant period prove to us, if we accommodate the history to the Lord's providential and gracious dealings with us, and our conduct towards him; and apply the exhortations and persuasions to our own consciences, to excite our minds to a believing grateful obedience to his commandments.

Before Christ 1451.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. The place and time at which the ensuing discourses were delivered, 1—5. 2d. A recapitulation of many passages of the foregoing history; illustrating the goodness of the Lord to the Israelites, and their rebellion against him, 6—46.

THESE *be* the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan, in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red *sea*, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

2 (*There are* eleven days *journey* from Horeb, by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea.)

3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei.

5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:

7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south,

Before Christ 1451.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *These*, &c.] The several names here mentioned cannot be brought to mark out any one place: but the meaning seems to be, that on the banks of Jordan Moses called to the remembrance of the people, the instructions which in those several places had been given them, and the providences which they had there experienced.

V. 2. *There are*, &c.] This seems to have been mentioned to remind the Israelites, that nothing but their own misconduct had occasioned their tedious wanderings: otherwise they might long before have been in peaceable possession of Canaan, as in eleven days they might have marched from Horeb to the borders of the land. This recapitulation was evidently intended to convince the people of the folly, as well as wickedness, of their conduct. They might perceive upon the review, that nothing else had obstructed their prosperity; and thus the more readily understand the advantages of obedience, and more willingly receive the following exhortations.

V. 5. *This law*, &c.] The word *law* is often used with considerable latitude, and sometimes with more distinct precision, which is generally perceivable from the context. There is no reason to suppose that this book contains *another law* diverse from that given in the foregoing books; and it is evident that it comprises much more than a repetition of the law before given: by *this law* must therefore be meant, the commands of God, enforced by arguments deduced from their reasonableness and authority, from the consequences which would follow obedience or disobedience, and from the experience of former years. These discourses were doubtless delivered to as many of the people as could come within hearing; and reported to the rest by the priests, Levites, or elders of the several tribes.

V. 6. *The*, &c.] (*Numb.* x. 11, 12.) From the time here mentioned the history was resumed.

V. 11.

south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them.

9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:

10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye *are* this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye *are*, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

13 Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken *is* good *for us* to do.

15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between *every* man and his brother, and the stranger *that is* with him.

17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment *is* God's: and the cause that *is* too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it.

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us.

21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not, neither be discouraged.

22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.

23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe.

24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out.

25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought *it* down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, *It is* a good land which the LORD our God doth give us.

26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God.

27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because

V. 11. *The Lord God*, &c.] In little more than two hundred years the people had been multiplied much above 10,000 times: the promise of God did not limit the number to which they should be increased, nor did the faith and prayer of Moses; for a large definite number is taken for an indefinite increase. Under Pharaoh their numbers excited jealousy and cruelty; but Moses delighted in, and prayed for their still greater, increase. This was therefore a tacit reproof of their murmurings and wishes to return into Egypt: and he evidently introduced this whole subject to remind them, that in his administration he sought not his own grandeur or advantage, but their good; and that in the most laborious, patient, and disinterested manner.

V. 12—16.] The counsel here referred to was suggested by Jethro before the giving of the law; (*Notes*, &c. *Exod.* xviii.) Moses in consequence proposed it to the Lord, who approved of it; and with the concurrence of the people it at length took place about the time when they departed from Horeb, and at no great distance from the appointment of the seventy elders; (*Numb.* xi.) though the former must have been distinct from the latter, and much more numerous, being according to the number of the thousands and hundreds, over whom they probably presided in a civil and military capacity, yet with subordination; and therefore the superiors of them might be called *judges*, (16:) or else these judges were the seventy elders, afterwards appointed.

V. 22—26.] (*Notes*, &c. *Numb.* xiii—xiv.) The people proposed this expedient in unbelief: Moses mistaking their intention, and the tendency of the measure, approved of it; and the Lord in just displeasure permitted them to follow their

Becauſe the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to deſtroy us.

28 Whither ſhall we go up? our brethren have diſcouraged our heart, ſaying, The people *is* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and walled up to heaven; and, moreover, we have ſeen the ſons of the Anakims there.

29 Then I ſaid unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.

30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he ſhall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt, before your eyes;

31 And in the wilderneſs, where thou haſt ſeen how that the LORD thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his ſon, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.

32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,

33 Who went in the way before you, to ſearch you out a place to pitch your tents *in*, in fire by night, to ſhew you by what way ye ſhould go, and in a cloud by day.

34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words and was wroth, and ſware, ſaying,

35 Surely there ſhall not one of theſe men of this evil generation ſee that good land which I ſware to give unto your fathers;

36 Save Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, he ſhall ſee it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, becauſe he hath wholly followed the LORD.

37 Alſo the LORD was angry with me for your ſakes, ſaying, Thou alſo ſhalt not go in thither.

38 *But* Joſhua the ſon of Nun, which ſtandeth before thee, he ſhall go in thither: encourage him; for he ſhall cauſe Iſrael to inherit it.

39 Moreover, your little ones, which ye ſaid ſhould be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they ſhall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they ſhall poſſeſs it.

40 But *as for* you, turn ye, and take your journey into the wilderneſs, by the way of the Red ſea.

41 Then ye anſwered and ſaid unto me, We have ſinned againſt the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill.

42 And the LORD ſaid unto me, ſay unto them, Go not up, neither fight: for I *am* not among you; leſt you be ſmitten before your enemies.

43 So I ſpake unto you, and ye would not hear, but rebelled againſt the commandment of the LORD, and went preſumptuouſly up into the hill.

44 And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain came out againſt you, and chaſed you as bees do, and deſtroyed you in Seir, *even* unto Hormah.

45 And ye returned, and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.

46 So

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their own counſel; which proved injurious to them only through their ſin.

V. 31. *The Lord*, &c.] Moſes in the bitterneſs of his ſpirit, when ſorely tried, had haſtily ſpoken, as if *he* had been required to *bear* Iſrael as a man doth his ſon, (*Num.* xi. 12:) but he here retracted it, and allowed that the Lord himſelf had borne them.

V. 32. *Ye did not believe*, &c.] The perſons, whom Moſes addreſſed, were another generation than that which had been ſentenced for unbelief to fall in the wilderneſs: but many of them might be concerned, though not of age; they evidenced very ſtrongly a diſpoſition to imitate the ſin of their fathers; and they formed the ſame nation, the ſame body corporate, though not the ſame individuals.—All their diſobedience is here charged upon their unbelief, which was it's root and firſt principle; as all true obedience ſprings from faith, in it's varied and diſtinct exerciſes.

V. 37. *Was angry*, &c.] It was natural for Moſes here to introduce this ſubject, though the event took place long after that of which he was diſcourſing; for it would occur to his mind that he too was excluded, and thus involved in the general ſentence, and that in conſequence of his being overcome by a temptation, which the unbelief of the people had laid in his way. This he mentioned, not to excuſe himſelf, but to humble them: and he would moreover remind them, that they heard the words of a dying man, and of one to whoſe death they had been acceſſary.

V. 44. *As bees do*, &c.] Bees with their ſtings aſſault, and have been known to kill, both men and cattle that have come near their hives.

46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode *there*.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1st. A continuation of the discourse of Moses, reminding the people of the charge that they had received, not to disturb the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites; which is blended with some fragments of very ancient history, and with an account of the Israelites' wasting in the wilderness, till the condemned generation was destroyed, 1—23. 2d. The grant and conquest of the kingdom of Sihon, &c. 24—37.

THEN we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.

2 And the LORD spake unto me, saying,

3 Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.

4 And command thou the people, saying, Ye *are* to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore.

5 Meddle not with them: for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

With advancing years and experience, the faithful servants of the Lord frequently acquire increasing reputation for wisdom, gravity, integrity, piety, and disinterested love to their fellow-creatures; as well as zeal for the glory of God. These add to their influence, and give weight to their instructions; and if their health permit, they may with vast advantage redouble their diligence in enforcing the truths which they have taught, in their practical tendency upon the consciences of the people, that they may have them in remembrance, and be influenced by them after their decease: (2 *Pet.* i. 12—15.) Whilst they draw nearer to the heavenly world, they often seem to breathe a purer air, and all their words have a heavenly savour; their motion accelerates as they approach their rest; their earnestness increases, when it can have no earthly motive to induce it; and their confidence and comfort are enlarged, in defiance of the approaching king of terrors: these concurring circumstances render their instructions doubly impressive, and they frequently have a durable effect upon the survivors.—The ministers of God should take every opportunity of putting the people in remembrance of his faithfulness, goodness, power, and wisdom, as manifested in his dealings towards them; and there may be seasons when it is proper, with modesty and humility, to call to their serious and dispassionate recollection, the evidences of their own love to souls, as displayed in their faithful labours, unwearied patience, and chearful self-denying sufferings for their eternal welfare; in order to obviate prejudice, and to obtain a more favourable attention to their further instructions and exhortations, referring all to the glory of God. But when this is deemed expedient, it is likewise necessary to shew the people their transgressions, that they may be duly humbled for them; the fatal effects of unbelief and disobedience, that they may watch against them; and the advantages of confidence in God and obedience to him, that they may follow after them: It will be proper also to unite with these instructions memorials of their own imperfection and sinfulness, both to abate the offence, to suggest encouragement, and for personal humiliation.—If it be highly useful for ministers thus to contrast the Lord's goodness and the people's misconduct, in tracing the outlines of their past experience: it is still more profitable for each of us frequently to meditate on such subjects, and to set apart time for that purpose; to divide our past lives into distinct periods; to review them separately; to give thanks for the mercies, which we can recollect to have received in each successive period; to confess and seek forgiveness of all the sins, which we can call to our remembrance; and thus having endeavoured to revive suitable affections; with earnest prayers and simple dependence on the Lord, to renew our acceptance of his salvation, and surrender of ourselves to his service.—Without repeating what has already been observed on the history here recapitulated; we may take notice in general that nothing but total unbelief, and the disobedience which results from it, can exclude any sinner from the promised rest; that unbelief, *partially* operating in disobedience, occasions manifold abatements and delays in our comforts; that our own expedients seldom avail to much good purpose; that courage, in the exercise of faith, and in the path of duty, enables the possessor to follow the Lord wholly, to disregard all obstructions, to triumph over all opposition, and to seize the promised blessings; that all the mercies we receive render our distrust more inexcusable; that the sins of some are the temptations of others, and involve both parties in guilt and punishment; that worldly sorrow is seldom better than impatience and rebellion, and thus worketh death; and that they, who do not exercise godly sorrow in due time, nor obey the call of mercy, must weep with bitter unavailing sorrow, when the sentence of condemnation is irrevocably past.—Finally we may observe, that every public and honourable trust implies a very heavy and laborious duty, and that frequently the duty is particularly described.—Happy is it for themselves, and for those around them, when men diligently search out, meditate upon, and pray over, such passages of the word of God, as describe *their* duties, and shew them what manner of persons they ought to be in that station of life, in which the providence of God has placed them: and then in the fear of God, as under his eye, and with reference to the day of judgment, endeavour to regulate their public and private conduct, according to these excellent practical admonitions.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 3. *We have compassed*, &c.] Here again an almost total silence is observed concerning more than thirty-seven years of the time, which the Israelites passed in

foot-breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau *for* a possession.

6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.

7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness; these forty years the LORD thy God *hath been* with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

8 And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned, and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

9 And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of their land *for* a possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.

10 The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims;

11 Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites call them Emims.

12 The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime: but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, as Israel did unto the land of his possession which the LORD gave unto them.

13 Now rise up, *said I*, and get you over the brook Zered; and we went over the brook Zered.

14 And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, *was* thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them.

15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.

16 So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people,

17 That the LORD spake unto me, saying,

18 Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day.

19 And *when* thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon *any* possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.

20 (That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time, and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims;

21 A people great and many, and tall as the

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in the wilderness, from the sentence of condemnation being denounced, until the criminals were nearly all executed. We may however suppose that Moses, Aaron, and others of the priests and Levites were diligently employed in instructing the people; and that this dispensation was overruled for the preparing many for death and heaven, even "of them whose "carcases fell in the wilderness;" and also for humbling and proving the survivors, and preparing them for a suitable behaviour in the land of Canaan: and that there was no time really lost by this tedious delay, as it would appear to them. In the mean time the Canaanites, elated with their first success, and perceiving their dreaded invaders gone back and entangled in the wilderness, probably feared no more from that quarter, but grew more insolent and daring in wickedness, and were ripening apace for destruction.

V. 7. *He knoweth*, &c.] The Lord had noticed, guided, and guarded the people, in all their marches and counter marches in the wilderness; and for forty years had blessed them with an abundant supply of every needful good: they needed not therefore to covet the possessions of Edom, having such an all-sufficient and tried Friend to trust to. Moses called the Edomites, *brethren*, (3.) though they would not acknowledge or act according to that relation;

for we must do our duty to our relatives, though they fail of theirs towards us. Thus Israel was taught to forgive *their* enemies, before they were employed to execute vengeance on the enemies of the Lord: and it is observable that no mention is here made of the opposition of the Edomites; for the Spirit, which spake by Moses, would not needlessly repeat such grievances, but bury them in oblivion: (*Numb.* xx. 14—21.)

V. 10. *Emims.*] This name is interpreted to mean *the terrible ones*; as the word *Zamzummim* may mean *the crafty ones*. (20.) All the nations here mentioned seem to have been of the posterity of Ham, that lay under the prophetical curse of Noah, which was thus executed upon them. (*Gen.* xiv. 5, 6.)

V. 12. *As Israel did*, &c.] Some render this, *as Israell shall do*, &c.; whilst others suppose that some few such additions were made by other inspired writers in later times.

V. 10. *Brook Zered.*] Or *valley*, (*Numb.* xxi. 20.)

V. 20—23.] All these ancient histories were introduced for the encouragement of the Israelites. If the Lord destroyed these gigantic people before the posterity of Lot, and of Esau; what cause had the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his chosen servants and friends, to fear

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the Anakims; but the LORD deſtroyed them before them, and they ſucceeded them, and dwelt in their ſtead:

22 As he did to the children of Eſau which dwelt in Seir, when he deſtroyed the Horims from before them; and they ſucceeded them, and dwelt in their ſtead, even unto this day:

23 And the Avims, which dwelt in Hazerim, *even* unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, deſtroyed them, and dwelt in their ſtead.)

24 Riſe ye up, take your journey, and paſs over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heſhbon, and his land: begin to poſſeſs *it*, and contend with him in battle.

25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee, upon the nations *that are* under the whole heaven, who ſhall hear report of thee, and ſhall tremble and be in anguiſh becauſe of thee.

26 And I ſent meſſengers out of the wilderneſs of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heſhbon, with words of peace, ſaying,

27 Let me paſs through thy land: I will go along by the high-way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left.

28 Thou ſhalt ſell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will paſs through on my feet,

29 (As the children of Eſau which dwelt in Seir, and the Moabites which dwelt in Ar, did unto me;) until I ſhall paſs over Jordan, into the land which the LORD our God giveth us.

30 But Sihon king of Heſhbon would not let us paſs by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his ſpirit, and made his heart obſtinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day.

31 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to poſſeſs, that thou mayeſt inherit his land.

32 Then Sihon came out againſt us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz.

33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us, and we ſmote him, and his ſons, and all his people.

34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly deſtroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city; we left none to remain:

35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourſelves, and the ſpoil of the cities which we took.

36 From Aroer, which *is* by the brink of the

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the Anakims though ſtrong, or the Canaanites though numerous; when they acted by his ſpecial commiſſion, had the ſecurity of ſucceſs in his promiſe, and the pledge of future victory in his preſence amongſt them, and the wonders which he had already wrought for them; and when they were the only nation of worſhippers of the Lord, in the ordinances of his inſtitution, that were to be found on earth? Nothing could poſſibly hurt them but unbelief and diſobedience, which had brought down the wrath of the Lord upon their fathers.

V. 24. *Begin to poſſeſs*, &c.] Hitherto the Iſraelites had poſſeſſed neither lands nor cities, but had been ſupported by miracle as wanderers in the waſte deſert: but now they were to *begin* to have poſſeſſions of houſes and eſtates, and to ſubſiſt as other people did. The word *it* is not in the original, and might well have been ſpared out of the tranſlation.

V. 26. *And I ſent*, &c.] (*Notes*, &c. *Numb.* xxi. 21—35.) The Lord's ſecret purpoſes cannot poſſibly be either the rule or motive of our conduct: and therefore they can have no influence upon the innocence or criminality of our actions. Whatever the Lord's intentions or intimations to Iſrael were; Sihon knowing nothing of them, could not be induced *by them*, but by his own pride, obſtinacy, and preſumption, to refuſe the propoſal of peace which was made him; and ought therefore to have attributed all the conſequences to his own miſconduct. The propoſal was made in ſincerity, and had he acceded to it he had doubtleſs been ſpared: but the Lord, for wiſe and righteous reaſons, was pleaſed to leave him to himſelf, well knowing what the conſequence would be. Thus this meſſage tended to diſcover the wickedneſs of his diſpoſition, and to illuſtrate the juſtice of God in the deſtruction of ſo haughty and determined an enemy of himſelf and of his people. All this tends to elucidate the propoſals of the goſpel-ſalvation to ſinners, who yet are left to the pride and ungodlineſs of their own hearts, and refuſe ſuch great ſalvation to their own deeper condemnation.

V. 29. *As the*, &c.] Hence it appears that the Edomites and Moabites on ſome occaſions ſold the Iſraelites victuals, and other neceſſaries, though they conſented not to their paſſage through their country, and were otherwiſe inimical to them.

V. 30. *Hardened*, &c.] Moſes was accuſtomed to view things in this light, and to ſpeak of them in this language; for the proper meaning of which the reader muſt be referred to the notes and practical obſervations upon the hiſtory of Pharaoh, from the 1ſt to the 16th chapter of Exodus inclusive.

V. 34. *And*, &c.] (*Note*, *Numb.* xxxi. 2.)

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the river of Arnon, and *from* the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us:

37 Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, *nor* unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbade us.

CHAP. III.

Contains, Moses, 1st. Giving the history of Israel's victory over Og, and the distribution of his kingdom, with that of Sihon, 1—20. 2d. Encouraging Joshua, 21, 22. 3d. Praying, that he might pass over Jordan, and the Lord's refusal to grant his request, 23—29.

THEN we turned, and went up the way to Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him, until none was left to him remaining.

4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

5 All these cities *were* fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many.

6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city.

7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The servants of God, whilst they despise worldly possessions in comparison of a treasure in heaven, and often live and die poor, are the only persons who lay up and leave to their children durable riches, in those manifold blessings which the Lord bestows on their posterity for their sakes.—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness "thereof," and he dispossesses nations at pleasure, in perfect justice, absolute sovereignty, and irresistible power, and disposes of every country to whom he pleases: but, without an express commission, none can plead his grant in excuse for the excesses, which, in ambition, rapacity, or revenge, they commit, whilst *unwittingly* they fulfil his secret purposes. When nations or individuals are ripe for destruction, having filled up the measure of their iniquity, the Lord in awful judgment gives them up to final and total obduracy; and their desperate wickedness both occasions their ruin, and manifests his righteousness in it: and when this is the case, the wisest are miserably infatuated, and the boldest speedily intimidated; they tremble and are in anguish, and so perish as instructive examples to the survivors. But, calling our attention off from these enemies of the Lord, to reflect upon his dealings with his people Israel, we are led to meditate upon years spent in vanity, through our transgressions and the Lord's indignation: a succession of uninteresting events and changes, of unprofitable employments and pursuits, of disappointed expectations and unsatisfying enjoyments, wear out the life of man, and bring one generation after another to the grave. Indeed ever since the sentence was passed upon offending man, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt "thou return," "the hand of the Lord hath been against "us to destroy us until we are consumed:" nor can wisdom, learning, authority, wealth, courage, vigour of constitution, or eminence of reputation, procure any exemption or respite in this universal execution: nay, even faith and

piety plead in vain for another passage to the heavenly felicity; (*Notes*, &c. 2 *Cor.* v. 2—4.) Thus in every thing, what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, his hand is engaged to perform. Wretched therefore are they, who, through impenitency and unbelief, abide and die under the incumbent weight of that "wrath from heaven, "which is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," in a future state! But happy they, whom "Jesus hath delivered from the wrath to "come," and to whom he hath given "the earnest of "his Spirit in their hearts." "All things are their's:" all the promises of God belong to them, and are ratified by covenant and by oath. His arm is engaged on their behalf, to perform all his word: "he knows," guides, guards, and approves their path, whilst "walking "through this great wilderness:" for the twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or even eighty years, of their past lives, they have lacked nothing, but have had all with a peculiar blessing. The Lord is their portion, nor need they envy the prosperity, or covet the possession of any worldling: he, who hath prepared for them an incorruptible inheritance, and taught them in the first place to seek it, will provide for them all that is needful and profitable by the way. They have only to submit to the Lord's disposal; to depend on and obey him; to abstain from what he forbids, and deny themselves when he requires it in his providence, or by his precept; to receive what he gives with thankfulness, and to use it with moderation; to endeavour to glorify him and adorn their profession, by an upright, generous, disinterested, forgiving and blameless deportment; not injurious to their enemies, nor needlessly burdensome to their friends; and "doing to all men, as they "would they should do unto them." Persevering in this course, the vanity of the world cannot prevent their comfort, nor can its opposition and tribulation interrupt the inward serenity of their minds: their inheritance cannot be affected by the revolutions of kingdoms, or the

cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.

8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that *was* on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;

9 (*Which* Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;)

10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead *was* a bedstead of iron: *is it* not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits *was* the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

12 And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.

14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi, and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day.

15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir.

16 And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites, I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border, even unto the river Jabbok, *which* is the border of the children of Ammon;

17 The plain also, and Jordan, *and the* coast *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, under Ashdoth-pisgah eastward.

18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all *that are* meet for the war.

19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (for I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you;

20 Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and *until* they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and *then* shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest.

22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

23 And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,

24 O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what god *is there* in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

25 I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that *is* beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your

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mutability of earthly possessions; death, with all its terrors and agonies, cannot hurt, and need not alarm them: all will combine in preparing them for heaven, and giving them the anticipation, and introducing them to the enjoyment, of those pleasures, which never satiate, and will never end. May this salvation, O Lord, be ours!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 11. *Og, Or, &c.*] It appears from this, that Og was descended from a race of giants of larger stature than even the Anakims who so terrified the Israelites.—If his bedstead of iron was intended for use, and not for ostentation, his bulk must have been enormous; as it was at least five yards long, and above two broad. By some means or other this bedstead was carried to Rabbath, and there preserved as a monument of his stature, or

of Israel's victory; for neither his vast strength, nor his numerous forces, could secure him against God, who fought for his people. This race of giants was soon extinct, but others remained within the land of Canaan, of whom we shall read in the history of David. (*Calmet.*)

V. 23. *I besought, &c.*] That is, *I prayed, I addressed myself to the Lord.* (Num. xxiii.)

Vs. 24—26. This prayer of Moses manifests a high valuation of the promised land, and an earnest desire of inheriting the privileges and felicities of it: but the Lord, in putting the Israelites in possession of it by the destruction of their enemies, had probably not yet irrevocably confirmed the sentence which he doth, and Moses had prevailed in behalf of Israel more than once in similar circumstances; other servants of the Lord have continued praying, after such declarations; (2 Sam. xii. 14—18. *Isai.* xxxviii.

your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

29 So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. The application of the preceding discourse in a variety of practical instructions, exhortations, and warnings, 1—40. 2d. The appointment of three cities of refuge, east of Jordan, 41—43. 3d. The introduction to the discourse of the following chapters, 44—49.

NOW therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the

xxxviii. 1—15:) and there appears not to have been any thing displeasing to the Lord in his request, though, for an example to Israel, he did not please to grant it: but doubtless he brought Moses to acquiesce in the refusal. Thus he prevailed for Israel, but for himself he could not prevail; which made him the more proper type of Christ, "who saved others, himself he could not save," that is, consistently with his design of saving others. Had the Jews remembered this circumstance concerning Moses, they could not well have made the other a matter of reviling to Christ.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing more hastens the destruction of sinners, than overlooking those examples of the Lord's justice which are set before them for their warning, and rushing forward in the same steps which have brought others to a miserable end.—All those advantages, with which men are naturally pleased, of which they are vain, and on which they depend, eventually conduce to their more speedy ruin and deeper condemnation, whenever they increase their pride, security, and boldness in transgression: so far are riches, power, worldly wisdom, and courage from profiting their ungodly possessors!—No arm can be strong when the Lord is against the Almighty; and he that assaults his church wages war against him. In this case especially "the battle "is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift:" his most insolent and presumptuous enemies will soon lie down in despair; and his feeblest and most timid friends have no cause to fear. His promise secures success in every undertaking, to which he commands them; and not only victory over, but abundant advantage from, every foe that assaults them; "the wealth of the sinner being laid up for the "just." Every experience of the Lord's faithfulness is a sure pledge of further mercies, and encouraging all his people shall be made heirs of the righteousness which is of faith." (Heb. xi. 7.)—But are we of that number? Do we seek redemption through Jesus Christ, and trust in his righteousness? Do we rejoice in his grace, when it has prevailed upon us to obey his commandments, and keep his statutes gloriously. Else the fairest professions from heaven are dead inactive faith deserves condemnation; and even the sins of believers are chastised with mercy, while the withholding of wonted manifestations, and the refusal of their prayers

for such mercies, as are not immediately connected with salvation. If this should be the case, let us kiss the rod, and seek to profit by our chastening. And if we have the earnest and prospects of heaven; let that suffice us, let us acquiesce in the Lord's will, and speak no more to him of other matters, which he sees good to refuse us.—When we are about to leave the world, the same principle, which hath before induced us to contribute, as we were able, to promote the cause of God and the good of his church, will dispose us to rejoice in the prospect of the good work being carried on by other and more honoured instruments; and will make us wish to close our eyes exhorting and encouraging our survivors to be valiant for the truth, assured that the Lord will fight for them and make them successful.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *Now, &c.*] The power of God, and his love to Israel, as delineated in the foregoing recapitulation of their history, are in this chapter improved as the ground and reason of a variety of practical admonitions and exhortations. The abstract of the argument may be thus stated. 'As the Lord hath manifested himself so able and willing to deliver, protect, and bless you; take heed that you do not forfeit his favour by disobedience; but from gratitude for past mercies, and in order to secure the continuance of his favour, make it your constant study and care to worship him alone, to depend on his promises and providence, to submit to his authority; as a nation governed by his judgments, and as individuals walking in all his ordinances and commandments. This is your true wisdom, this will certainly advance you to greatness, prosperity, and reputation, and secure your felicity; whereas the contrary conduct will surely issue in misery and ruin.' The subsequent practical instructions seem to be thus inferred from the preceding historical memorials; and they are enforced by every argument, and every motive, imaginable. There is indeed a continual reference to the national covenant made with Israel: yet the whole may be *evangelically accommodated* to the case of those who live under the gospel dispensation, and to that of true Christians; whilst it directly suits the state of nations favoured with the light of revelation.

[illegible] many, &c.] The Israelites had witnessed many instances, in which disobedience was punished with immediate death. On that account their fathers had been doomed to die in the wilderness; nor could they expect to possess Canaan if they were not obedient.—Our obedience

the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

2 You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you.

3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.

4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day.

5 Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

6 Keep therefore, and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.

7 For what nation *is there so* great, who *hath* God *so* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for*?

8 And what nation *is there so* great, that hath statutes and judgments *so* righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day?

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons:

10 *Specially* the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.

11 And ye came near, and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only *ye heard* a voice.

13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day *that* the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,)

16 Lest ye corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female;

17 The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air;

18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the

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as individuals cannot *merit* salvation; but it is the only evidence that we are partakers of "the gift of God, "which is the eternal life through Jesus Christ." And disobedience both deserves and procures eternal destruction, to those who persevere in it.

V. 2. *Ye shall not add*, &c.] To add any thing to the commands of God, as obligatory upon the conscience, or an essential part of religion, seems to charge him with an oversight, and is as affronting to his wisdom, as to diminish any thing from it is to his authority and goodness. (*Note*, *Rev.* xxii. 18, 19.)

V. 3, 4.] (*Num.* xxv.) It appears from this appeal, that the pestilence, as well as the sword of the magistrate, singled out the guilty persons, and spared the rest: (*Psalm* xci. 6—8.)

V. 5. *Behold I have*, &c.] The people had been always ready to conclude that Moses had taught them by his own authority; but at the close of his life he solemnly assured them, that he had taught them exactly as the Lord had taught him, neither more nor less, nor otherwise.

V. 13. *This covenant*, &c.] (*Notes*, &c. *Exod.* xix. xx.) The ten commandments were the foundation of the national covenant made with Israel, as well as of the covenant of works, though not exactly in the same manner: and the writing of them in the heart, by creating a correspondent judgment and disposition of mind, forms the evidence, that the covenant of grace is ratified with us, through faith in Jesus Christ.

V. 14. *To teach you*, &c.] This relates to the *judicial* and *ceremonial* laws before commented upon, as the former verses referred to the *ten commandments*.

V. 19. *Shouldest be driven*, &c.] The propensity of human nature to idolatry, the artifice of satan, and the plausibility of the practice here forbidden, would concur to *drive* the people into it. All idolatry is extremely irrational; for it is most absurd to make the creatures of God his rivals, and that the

the moon, and the ſtars, *even* all the hoſt of heaven, ſhouldeſt be driven to worſhip them, and ſerve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.

21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your ſakes, and ſware that I ſhould not go over Jordan, and that I ſhould not go in unto that good land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

22 But I muſt die in this land, I muſt not go over Jordan: but ye ſhall go over, and poſſeſs that good land.

23 Take heed unto yourſelves, leſt ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeneſs of any *thing* which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

24 For the LORD thy God *is* a conſuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

25 When thou ſhalt beget children, and children's children, and ſhall have remained long in the land, and ſhall corrupt *yourſelves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeneſs of any *thing*, and ſhall do evil in the ſight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:

26 I call heaven and earth to witneſs againſt you this day, that ye ſhall ſoon utterly periſh from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to poſſeſs it; ye ſhall not prolong *your* days upon it, but ſhall utterly be deſtroyed.

27 And the LORD ſhall ſcatter you among the nations, and ye ſhall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD ſhall lead you.

28 And there ye ſhall ſerve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and ſtone, which neither ſee, nor hear, nor eat, nor ſmell.

29 But if from thence thou ſhalt ſeek the LORD thy God, thou ſhalt find *him*, if thou ſeek him with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul.

30 When thou art in tribulation, and all theſe things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and ſhalt be obedient to his voice;

31 (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God,) he will not forſake thee, neither deſtroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he ſware unto them.

32 For aſk now of the days that are paſt, which were before thee, ſince the day that God created man upon the earth, and *aſk* from the one ſide of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any ſuch thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it?

33 Did *ever* people hear the voice of God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as thou haſt heard, and live?

34 Or hath God aſſayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midſt of *another* nation, by temptations, by ſigns, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 Unto thee it was ſhewed, that thou mighteſt know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none elſe beſides him.

36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might inſtruct thee; and upon

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inſtruments of his bounty ſhould rob him of his glory: but the worſhip of thoſe ſplendid and uſeful luminaries is more *plauſible*, and eaſier to be accounted for, and therefore more carefully to be guarded againſt, than any other. Let any one ſeriouſly conſider the multiplied and varied expreſſions of theſe verſes, and then form his judgment, and bring in his verdict, reſpecting the uſe of images in the church of Rome.

V. 20. *Iron furnace*, &c.] This ſtrong expreſſion forcibly marks the miſery which the Iſraelites endured, and the danger to which they were expoſed, in the Egyptian bondage.—Hence they were brought forth to be "unto the Lord a people of inheritance;" for all the revenue of worſhip, obedience, and praiſe, which the Lord receives from this lower world, is paid him by his redeemed people; by whom alone he is loved, in whom alone he delights, and for whoſe ſake the frame of nature is preſerved.

V. 28. *And*, &c.] Though the Jews in their preſent diſperſion do not worſhip images, yet they are evidently ignorant of the God of the Bible; "for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that ſent him:" and many expreſſions lead us to conclude that this prophecy looks forward to preſent and even to future times.

V. 34. *By temptations*, &c.] The commands and the judgments and reſpites, with which Pharaoh was required

upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight, with his mighty power out of Egypt;

38 To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

39 Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the Lord he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else.

40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

41 Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising:

42 That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that, fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live:

43 *Namely*, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan of the Manassites.

44 And this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel:

45 These *are* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt;

46 On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt:

47 And

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to let Israel go, made *trial* of his temper, and discovered his unwillingness to obey and his inability to resist.

V. 40. *Thou*, &c.] Here the first discourse of this book is concluded; and the appointment of the cities of the refuge in the next verses has no visible connection with what goes before, or what follows: but probably Moses appointed them before he delivered his next discourse, that he might shew them how that matter ought to be regulated. Thus he lost no part of his short remaining time, but filled up the whole with speaking, or acting, for the good of the people.

V. 44. *Law*, &c.] (*Note*, i. 5.) This appears to be rather an introduction to the following discourse, than any thing annexed to the foregoing. Moses, having improved practically some portions of the foregoing history; proceeded to repeat and enforce the laws which he had before delivered, with some additions and explanations, beginning with the ten commandments.

V. 46. *Beth-peor*.] Or the *house of Peor*; probably a temple of Baal-peor was full in view, whilst Moses was pressing upon the people the worship of God alone; and perhaps that very temple, where so many had sinned to their own destruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every instance, general and particular, of the Lord's kindness to us, forms a conclusive argument for our obedience to his commandments; and will either have this effect upon us, or will testify against us and enhance our final condemnation. Indeed the commandments themselves are all so reasonable, equitable, and salutary, that if we were not blinded and infatuated by satan, a wise regard to our own interest would induce us to obedience: for they are only righteous and kind rules which the wise Creator hath affectionately prescribed to his rational creatures, by attending unto which they may secure their own felicity, and conduce to that of each other, whilst they render him the glory which belongs to him. None of them can be broken without injuring ourselves and others, as well as dishonouring God: and a peaceful conscience, a tranquil mind, well regulated passions and appetites, a sweet sense of the divine favour, an unspeakable pleasure in his ways, and complete peace, harmony, and love among each other; together with health of body and vigour of mind, must have been the consequence of perfect obedience. Even in that measure in which believers are now enabled to obey them; that obedience invariably produces the same effects, in proportion to the degree and constancy with which it is performed; and indeed the case is the same with nations, as with individuals. They therefore are, and will one day appear to be, the only wise and understanding people, (however now derided as fools,) who make the law of God the rule of their whole conduct, without adding to or diminishing from it: and the same light which discovers *their* wisdom, will detect the folly and madness of those boasted pretenders to superior understanding, who reject the divine testimony, and disregard the divine authority; namely, that of the day of judgment, and of eternity: then it will be undeniably evident that true religion is but another name for wisdom, greatness, honour, pleasure, and felicity. Even in this world experience decides that they, who forsake the Lord, plunge themselves into many miseries, which those escape who cleave unto him: and notwithstanding self-denial and persecutions, the temporal advantages of true religion, though not so shewy, are vastly more solid and satisfactory, than the most splendid acquisitions of prosperous wickedness; without

47 And they poſſeſſed his land, and the land of Og king of Baſhan, two kings of the Amorites, which *were* on this ſide Jordan, toward the ſun-riſing;

48 From Aroer, which *is* by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which *is* Hermon,

49 And all the plain on this ſide Jordan eaſtward, even unto the ſea of the plain, under the ſprings of Piſgah.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. The ten commandments repeated by Moſes to the people, with an introduction, and ſome variations, 1—21. 2d. An account of what paſſed in conſequence of their being ſpoken from mount Sinai, and a concluding exhortation, 22—33.

AND Moſes called all Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Hear, O Iſrael, the ſtatutes and judgments which I ſpeak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them.

2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day.

4 The

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without bringing into the account the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt and the hope of glory on the one hand; or the remorſe and terrors which are more ſenſibly felt, than honeſtly acknowledged, on the other hand: for "godli-"neſs hath both the promiſe of this life, and of that "which is to come." But if we would ſecure ſuch advantages, with ſuch hearts as ours are, in ſuch a world as this, and in the midſt of ſo many temptations and enemies as ſurround us; we muſt apply our minds ſeriouſly, both "to know and to conſider" the works and word of God: we muſt "take great heed unto ourſelves, and keep our "ſouls diligently," leſt the good impreſſions that are excited, depart out of our hearts, without producing any abiding effects; (*Heb.* ii. 1. xii. 15.) we muſt watch and pray always, that we may not be entangled by thoſe ſnares which are ſtrewed in every place: we muſt keep a ſtrict and conſtant guard upon our imagination, affections, ſenſes, and appetites; upon every one of them: our minds muſt be armed with every imaginable motive, which can encourage our hopes and excite our fears, or influence our love or hatred; that in patience, courage, and ſelf-denial, we may be prepared for labour, ſufferings, and the croſs in whatever form it is laid in our way.—All this and much more muſt be attended to, if we would walk ſafely and comfortably with God, through this world to glory. But building upon Chriſt as our foundation by faith in his blood; and drawing from his fulneſs, by daily earneſt prayer, wiſdom, ſtrength, and grace, all this will become practicable and pleaſant to our ſouls.—Nothing is more fundamentally neceſſary in this important concern, than juſt and proper apprehenſions of the perfections of God; and univerſal hiſtory reminds us of man's ſtrange propenſity to idolatry.—We muſt not therefore truſt to our vain reaſonings, nor indulge our groſs imaginations; but, by faith exerciſed upon the divine teſtimony, muſt obtain our knowledge of God from revelation alone; particularly attending to the diſplays which he hath *made* of his power, juſtice, vengeance, goodneſs, mercy, and truth, in the various diſpenſations there recorded.—We ought alſo carefully to ſtudy the relations and obligations in which we ſtand to him, and his law, and that worſhip which he requires: we ſhould endeavour to underſtand our own ſituation as ſinners under a diſpenſation of mercy; and the nature of that precious covenant to which we are invited to accede. Here greater things are ſhewn us, than

ever Iſrael ſaw from mount Sinai; greater mercies are conferred on us, than they experienced in Egypt, in the wilderneſs, or in Canaan; one ſpeaks to us of infinitely greater dignity than Moſes, who, for our ſakes and for our ſins, bare the anger of the Lord in our ſtead upon the croſs, and pleads with us by his dying love, not with diſplays of fiery terror but with mild accents of mercy, not to neglect ſo great ſalvation.—Nay, our God is ſo merciful, that though we have long rebelled, yet if at laſt we ſeek him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and turn to him, and become obedient to his voice, (fleeing for refuge to the hope ſet before us,) he will yet pardon us, and ratify to us all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant.—But apoſtles, prophets, and miniſters will teſtify againſt us; yea heaven and earth alſo, if we refuſe him that ſpeaketh to us. Even our natural affection to our children may form an additional motive to obedience; for when the Lord loves the parent, he oft chooſes and bleſſes their children after them; eſpecially when they diligently inſtruct them in the ſame good way. (*Gen.* xviii. 19.) Thus may we ſeek an entail of heavenly bleſſings upon our lateſt poſterity; and both parents and miniſters may learn profitably from Moſes, to inſtruct their children and people, with fervour and faithfulneſs, even to the cloſe of their lives, all that the Lord had taught them, with a mixture of firmneſs, affection, and gravity, ſuited to ſuch important occaſions. And finally, as the preſent diſperſion of the Jews ſhews the chapter before us to be a *prophecy*, as well as a *ſermon*: let us not forget to pray for them, that in their tribulation, even now in theſe latter days, they may ſeek the Lord, and be reinſtated in the privileges of the covenant that was made with their fathers.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 3. *But with us, &c.*] The Sinai-covenant was different from that made with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, the fathers of the people of Iſrael. (*Gal.* iii. 17.) That was chiefly *ſpiritual*, and related mainly to *ſpiritual* bleſſings: this was *national*, and related eſpecially to their poſſeſſion of the promiſed land.—But the expreſſion here uſed may alſo mean that the covenant made at Horeb was as obligatory upon the generation which Moſes then addreſſed, as it was upon thoſe who were immediately preſent when the law was delivered, and the covenant ratified. (*Exod.* xxiv.) For there were a collective

4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire.

5 (I ſtood between the LORD and you at that time, to ſhew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reaſon of the fire, and went not up into the mount,) ſaying,

6 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage.

7 Thou ſhalt have none other gods before me.

8 Thou ſhalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeneſs *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

9 Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf unto them, nor ſerve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,

10 And ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

11 Thou ſhalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

12 Keep the ſabbath-day to ſanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

13 Six days thou ſhalt labour, and do all thy work:

14 But the ſeventh day *is* the ſabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-ſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant, nor thine ox, nor thine aſs, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger that *is* within thy gates, that thy man-ſervant and thy maid-ſervant may reſt as well as thou.

15 And remember that thou waſt a ſervant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched-out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the ſabbath-day.

16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou ſhalt not kill.

18 Neither ſhalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither ſhalt thou ſteal.

20 Neither

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tive body, incorporated by charter, the obligations and advantages of which deſcended to the ſucceſſors of thoſe to whom it was at firſt conceded: (*Note, Exod.* xix. 5.) Thus all, favoured with the light of revelation, are bound to ſubmit to it, equally with thoſe to whom it was firſt given; though they behold not the miracles, with which it was authenticated: for there are other evidences, external and internal, of its divine authority, which gather force by revolving ages; as may be evidently perceived by ſuch as impartially and diligently conſider them. On the other hand, they who ſubmit, and are willing to be ſaved and ruled according to that revelation, have equal benefits with thoſe to whom it was firſt communicated: yea eſpecial bleſſings are pronounced upon thoſe, "who have not "ſeen, and yet have believed." Some indeed of theſe Iſraelites had been preſent at the giving of the law, though under age; but many of them were at that time unborn, and many more in their infancy and childhood: yet the covenant was made with their fathers in behalf of them, as well as of themſelves.

V. 14, 15.] The original reaſon for hallowing the ſabbath, taken from God's reſting from the work of creation on the ſeventh day, is not here mentioned: for though this muſt ever remain valid, yet it is not the only one. The Iſraelites were required to remember their oppreſſed and wretched ſtate in Egypt, and their wonderful deliverance: and, whilſt they worſhipped and were thankful to their great and gracious Deliverer, they were commanded humanely to allow reſpite from labour to their ſlaves; and piouſly to afford them an opportunity of becoming acquainted with Jehovah, and worſhipping him in his ordinances, from which advantages they themſelves had been cruelly and impiouſly reſtricted by their Egyptian oppreſſors. And this paſſage ſeems introduced as a *parentheſis* by Moſes, while repeating to the people the law as given from mount Sinai.—Whilſt the *judicial* law ſuppoſed the *exiſtence of ſlavery* amongſt the Jews; (*Note, Exod.* xxi. 2;) theſe and ſimilar regulations, when duly complied with, were calculated to convert the ſlavery of the *heathen* in Iſrael into a bleſſing to their ſouls, by bringing them under the means of grace, and putting them in the way of obtaining all the privileges of God's peculiar people. And amidſt the enormities of modern ſlavery, if it could truly be ſaid, that the ſlaves reſted from all labour on the Lord's day, and were allowed and required to keep it holy, and were on that day ſtatedly and properly inſtructed in the nature of *genuine Chriſtianity*, ſo as to afford them an adequate and general opportunity of being made partakers of its bleſſings; it would plead more powerfully for it's being ſuffered to exiſt, than all other reaſons, which have been urged in it's favour: though even that could never juſtify ſo flagrant a violation of the law of love.—The redemption of Chriſt forms now to us another additional reaſon of hallowing the ſabbath, and a ſpecial employment for that holy day, of which the foregoing was typical.—There are ſeveral other verbal variations in the commandments as here recited; but the thing ſignified is the ſame. (*Notes, &c. Exod.* xx.)

V. 28, 29.]

20 Neither ſhalt thou bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.

21 Neither ſhalt thou deſire thy neighbour's wife, neither ſhalt thou covet thy neighbour's houſe, his field, or his man-ſervant, or his maid-ſervant, or his ox, or his aſs, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's.

22 These words the LORD ſpake unto all your aſſembly in the mount out of the midſt of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkneſs, with a great voice; and he added no more: and he wrote them in two tables of ſtone, and delivered them unto me.

23 And it came to paſs, when ye heard the voice out of the midſt of the darkneſs, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders.

24 And ye ſaid, Behold, the LORD our God hath ſhewed us his glory, and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire: we have ſeen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

25 Now therefore why ſhould we die? for this great fire will conſume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we ſhall die.

26 For who *is there of* all fleſh, that hath heard the voice of the living God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God ſhall ſay; and ſpeak thou unto us all that the LORD our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.

28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye ſpake unto me; and the LORD ſaid unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have ſpoken unto thee: they have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken.

29 O that there was ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go ſay to them, Get you into your tents again.

31 But as for thee, ſtand thou here by me, and I will ſpeak unto thee all the commandments, and the ſtatutes, and the judgments, which thou ſhalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to poſſeſs it.

32 Ye ſhall obſerve to do therefore as the LORD

V. 28, 29.] When the people were alarmed with the terror of deſtruction from the voice of God, ſpeaking from mount Sinai, and were conſcious that they could not *thus* approach him, but deſired a mediator by whom God might ſpeak to them, and promiſed to hear and obey that mediator, "they ſaid well;" and had they properly underſtood their own requeſt, and been ſuitably and abidingly ſo diſpoſed, all would have gone on and terminated well. But in the following verſe the Lord in very affecting language ſuggeſts, that it was not ſo: for he ſaw, that though they were alarmed and convinced, they were not duly humbled, nor diſpoſed either to receive in faith the promiſed Mediator whom Moſes typified, or perſeveringly to walk in the ways of holy obedience. The language ſhews us what God *approves, delights in, and accepts*, as honourable to his name, ſuitable to his character, and profitable to his creatures. This way of ſpeaking, after the manner of men, is extremely encouraging to thoſe, who are humbly deſirous of the ſalvation of the goſpel, feel a willingneſs in their hearts to obey the commands of God, and are taught to pray for grace to enable them ſo to do: as it evinces the Lord's readineſs to aſſiſt and accept thoſe, who are brought to this diſpoſition; and ſhews that he doth not delight in puniſhment for it's own ſake, but only when the righteous purpoſes of his government render it neceſſary: as the merciful prince delights not in, yea weeps over, the death warrant, which a variety of important conſiderations render it indiſpenſably neceſſary he ſhould ſign. But we muſt not attempt to argue any thing from ſuch paſſages, reſpecting the conduct of God towards impenitent ſinners, or the method of his diſpenſing his ſpecial bleſſings: many reaſons may determine the divine conduct, which are too deep for us to diſcover, too myſterious for us to comprehend, and of which we muſt not preſume to judge. This is however evident and ſufficient, that he certainly will ſave, and delight in ſaving, every one who repents and believes the goſpel. Knowing this, we muſt learn our proper place and buſineſs, and leave the government of the world to the only wiſe God. (*Notes, Pſalm.* lxxxi. 13: *Iſaiah*, xlviii. 17—19. *Jer.* xliv. 4. *Matt.* xxiii. 37—39.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The word of God is ſpoken to us, that we may attentively liſten to it; and thus learn, retain, and practiſe it, in which all religion is ultimately centred, and without which the whole is but a dead carcaſe, not only worthleſs but abominable. Of this practice the law of God is the univerſal, immutable, and everlaſting rule: but we have no encouragement or ability to obey that law, in any meaſure, or in any ſenſe, but what is derived from the new covenant of mercy and grace, which is made with us through the mediation of Chriſt. He continually ſtands between

LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you: that ye may live, and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* ye may prolong *your* days in the land which ye shall possess.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. Exhortations to obedience from various motives, mixed with doctrines, instructions, commandments, and cautions, 1—19. 2d, Directions for instructing children, 20—25.

NOW these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it.

2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee; thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged.

3 Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God *is* one LORD.

5 Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And

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the holy God, and the sinner who believes in his name, both to ensure his acceptance, and direct, encourage, and assist his obedience. The words he once spake on earth are written in the Scriptures for our instruction; and from age to age sinners are invited to accede to his covenant and share the promised blessings; which invitation cannot be refused without ensuring eternal destruction, and nothing except such refusal can ruin us. But we must remember that good words may be spoken, good resolutions formed, and transient convictions experienced; even when the invitation is finally refused, through prevailing pride of heart, and love of sin. Of such we may say "O that there were such an heart in them, &c.!" But we had better turn it into a prayer for ourselves, and for each other; and beg of the Lord that he would give us such an heart, "that we may fear him, and keep all his commandments "always:" and we may present such a petition in faith, assured that the Lord delighteth in bestowing spiritual blessings on those, who have been taught to value them, and to seek them in the name of Jesus Christ.—Let sinners then tremble at this fiery law, and flee for refuge to the Saviour's blood: let professors examine carefully, whether their faith in Christ be accompanied with a desire of having that law written in their hearts, and reduced to practice in their whole conduct: and let believers make it more and more their study and delight, that they may do as the Lord God hath commanded them, without turning aside to the right hand, or to the left. Thus by universal godliness, righteousness, temperance, patience, purity, and love, and an exact regard to every relative duty, they will best evince their faith, adorn the gospel, glorify the Lord, benefit their fellow creatures, entail a blessing on their children, and be ripening for glory. In attending to these important concerns we need repeated instructions and admonitions: let us then not deem it tedious to hear, read, and meditate frequently on the same truths and precepts. Let us learn ourselves to hallow the Lord's sabbaths, and set an example of attending on his ordinances: and, remembering that our servants are of the same nature with ourselves, let us ever allow them also suitable relaxation from labour, and opportunity for hallowing the sabbath, and learning the way of salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *These*, &c.] In this and similar passages, *the commandments* seem to denote *the moral law*, *the statutes the ceremonial law*, and *the judgments the judicial law*.

V. 4. *The Lord*, &c.] The threefold mention of the divine names, and the plural number of the original word translated God, are supposed by many commentators to be no obscure intimations of a Trinity of persons, even in this express declaration of the *unity* of the God-head, to the exclusion of the many lords and gods of the heathens, and in opposition to them. (*Note, Gen.* i. 1.)

V. 5. *And thou shalt*, &c.] In the foregoing verse we have the first article of our creed; in this "the first and "great commandment," which briefly comprehends the whole of the first table of the law. (*Matt.* xxii. 36—38. *Mark*, xii. 28—34.) This love of God perfectly consists with the reverential fear of him before-mentioned, yea the more we love him, the more we shall regard his authority, reverence his majesty, fear to offend or dishonour him, and be disposed to render unto him that adoration and worship which he requires. Human laws can only take cognizance of the outward conduct; but the law of the heart-searching God requires LOVE, the seat of which is in the inmost soul: that love comprises a supreme valuation of his infinite excellency and amiableness; an entire desire of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of Him as our felicity; a cordial delight in contemplating his manifested glories, and in worshipping and obeying him; a glowing gratitude for all his innumerable and invaluable mercies; zeal for his glory, and an ardent desire that all our fellow creatures, in conjunction with us, may know, love, worship, obey, and serve him. The dispositions and affections are required to be as large as the powers of the soul itself, and to engross and fill the whole, to the entire exclusion of all *contrary* affections, and to the absolute regulation and moderation of all *other* affections;

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildest not,

11 And houses full of all good *things* which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

12 *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

15 (For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you;) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

18 And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers;

19 To

affections, in subordination and subserviency to this leading and governing principle: so that nothing should in any sense, or in any degree, be loved by us, but for the sake, and according to the commandment or allowance, of God. Thus are we *reasonably* required to love the Lord our God, both for what he is in himself, and what he hath done for us, and what he is and will be to us; and that uniformly, constantly, perfectly, and progressively.—Whatever our natural capacities may be, or to whatever improvements we may in this or in a future world attain, the Lord commands us to give him *the whole*: and were our love thus perfect, our worship, obedience, and submission would be perfect also; nor could it ever possibly vary, be interrupted, or fall short of our whole strength and power, without a failure, variation, or diminution of this inward principle of love. Yet even this would admit of degrees and increase, both in the principle and in it's effects, from the first dawning of reason in the infant, (such as was the child Jesus,) in progressive enlargement to the highest possible exaltation of the angelic nature. For no creature to all eternity can ever love God, in measure equal to his loveliness, and excellency, and worthiness to be loved, which are infinite as his incomprehensible being: but each might, and ought to love the Lord to the utmost extent of all the powers which the Creator had bestowed on him. This would at once secure to God the glory due to his name, and to his creatures that felicity of which he hath formed them capable. Thus it is with angels in heaven; thus it was with man in paradise; but alas! the carnal mind of fallen man is enmity against God: and as we all are by nature entirely destitute of the love of God, we all love ourselves, the world, and our favourite sinful indulgences and pursuits, with all our heart, our mind, our soul, and strength, and therefore sacrifice every thing to these idols. In regeneration an internal revolution takes place; the usurpers are dethroned, the Lord himself takes possession of the heart, and becomes the *supreme* object of our love: but so long as sin dwelleth in us, we never love God according to the perfection of this precept; but our love in all it's exercises, and all the effects of it, are variable, interrupted, and comparatively languid. All *that*, in our affections, dispositions, and conduct, which comes short of this perfect love, is *sin*, and needs forgiveness; and therefore our best obedience, though it evidence our faith and glorify God, can do nothing towards our justification. Yet this law is our standard of duty; in progressive sanctification we are renewed in conformity to it; and the spirits of just men made perfect are, in this respect, already made equal to the angels in heaven.

V. 6. *Shall be*, &c.] That is, 'Let these words be treasured up in the memory, rooted in the judgment, and reigning in the affections; that they may become habitually the subjects of converse and meditation, to the exclusion of all those, which are contrary or inferior to them.'

V. 7—9.] The Israelites were commanded to take every method of making the knowledge of the word of God familiar to them and to their families; that every object which they beheld, and every action which they performed, might serve as a memorial of it. Some of these external methods may be less necessary at present when copies of the Bible are so cheap and numerous: but the reason and general meaning of the command is still the same, and equally obligatory. The same should be our valuation of the word of God, our familiar acquaintance with it, and our open profession of faith in it and regard to it.

V. 13. *And shalt swear* &c.] As an act of religious worship,

19 To caſt out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath ſpoken.

20 *And* when thy ſon aſketh thee in time to come, ſaying, What *mean* the teſtimonies, and the ſtatutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

21 Then thou ſhalt ſay unto thy ſon, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

22 And the LORD ſhewed ſigns and wonders, great and ſore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his houſehold, before our eyes;

23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he ſware unto our fathers.

24 And the LORD commanded us to do all theſe ſtatutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preſerve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

25 And it ſhall be our righteouſneſs, if we obſerve to do all theſe commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. A charge to the Iſraelites utterly to deſtroy the ſeven devoted nations of Canaan, making no leagues or marriages with them, 1—4. *2d. Repeated charges to deſtroy their idols,* 5. 25, 26. *3d. Promiſes to the nation while obedient, and intimations of vengeance on the diſobedient,* 6—24.

WHEN

ſhip, on important occaſions, the Iſraelites were *commanded* to appeal to Jehovah by a ſolemn oath; and not to the falſe and imaginary deities of the heathen nations around them. This fully proves the *lawfulneſs* of oaths in themſelves: for the unchangeable God could not expreſsly command any thing contrary to the requirements of *his own moral law.*

V. 25. *It ſhall be* &c.] The believing and penitent attendance of the Iſraelites on the typical ceremonies and ſacrifices, as productive of a ſincere obedience to the moral precepts, would, for the ſake of the promiſed Redeemer, though imperfect, be excepted as if it had been a perfect righteouſneſs.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the knowledge of the ſpirituality and excellency of the holy law of God is ſuited to ſhew ſinful man his need of a Saviour, and to prepare his heart to welcome a free ſalvation: ſo the goſpel is calculated to magnify and honour the law; not only in the perfect obedience of the incarnate Son of God to its holy precept, and in his willing ſubjection to its aweful curſe; but in that it is a plan formed, and continually accompliſhing, of bringing back apoſtate rebels and enemies, by repentance, faith, forgiveneſs, and renewing grace, to love God ſupremely even in this world, and as perfectly as the law requires, and as angels love him, in the world above; and accordingly to worſhip and obey him as their great buſineſs and felicity. Nor is any thing valuable in religion, any further than this end is anſwered; whatever creed is aſſented to, whatever forms are obſerved, or whatever tranſient emotions are excited: (*Gal.* v. 6.) In proportion as we poſſeſs that faith which produceth and worketh by love, we ſhall delight in the commands, the ordinances, and the people of God; we ſhall ſavour heavenly converſe and heavenly exerciſes; and "our meditation of him will be ſweet."—But alas that very conduct, which this chapter preſcribes to Iſrael, could ſcarcely be reduced to practice amongſt us who are called Chriſtians, without exciting *almoſt* univerſal contempt and diſguſt! To be continually ſpeaking of the truths and commands of God, upon our journeys, in our families, and in company; to make religion our firſt ſubject in the morning, and our laſt at night; and to be producing quotations from Scripture, on every occaſion, and in every way, without reſerve or apology, as thoſe, who glory and delight in it, would certainly bring upon us the charge of affectation, of enthuſiaſm, nay probably of hypocriſy. This lamentably diſcovers to how low an ebb religion has fallen among profeſſed Chriſtians: but without the truths and precepts of the ſacred volume are indeed in our hearts, and practiſed in our lives, all our profeſſion and talk will be but lip-labour, and juſtly to be condemned as hypocritical.—Though every condition in life expoſes us to peculiar ſnares; yet none are ſo dangerous, and ſo commonly ruinous, as thoſe of proſperity and affluence: for pride, love of the world, forgetfulneſs of God, and diſregard to eternal things, and ſuch like poiſonous weeds, naturally grow from our wicked hearts, when fattened (ſo to ſpeak) with the rank manure of wealth. So that the more God does for us in his providence, the more we are ungratefully prone to do againſt him! Let none of us then be deſirous, or in haſte to be rich: (*Note* 1 *Tim.* vi. 9, 10.) Let thoſe, who are rich, or growing rich, tremble, "and beware leſt they forget the Lord." Their danger is great, but "with God all things are poſſible," let them ſeek to him for grace ſufficient for them. (*Mark*, x. 23—27.) Let the poor learn to be content and thankful for their ſafer lot: and inſtead of being anxious to get wealth for our children, (which is like building a wall to keep them out of heaven,) let us be diligent in explaining the truths, precepts, ordinances, and hiſtory, of God's word to them, and to all committed to our care; in making edifying obſervations on the occurrences of Providence; and in encouraging their enquiries, by giving them plain, familiar, and full anſwers to them; endeavouring by every means to ſhew them the nature, reaſonableneſs, and advantage of true religion; confirming the whole with the example of ſerious godlineſs in every part, and in every occurrence of life; with an affectionate exerciſe of our authority, and fervent prayers for and with them. Thus will it be well with us and them; and we may hope for an incorruptible inheritance for them, and for ourſelves, when all the wealth of this world ſhall be no more.

NOTES.

WHEN the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, *and* utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

6 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; (for ye *were* the fewest of all people;)

8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know, therefore, that the LORD thy God he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations;

10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day to do them.

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers.

13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

15 And

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—4.] The number and names of these nations are varied from those which were before mentioned; (*Gen.* xv. 19—21.) In so long a course of years many revolutions would take place; some tribes would be extinct or incorporated with others, and some would have changed their names. But they were the posterity of the same people, inhabiting the same land; and they had now filled up the measure of their iniquities. The Israelites were therefore appointed the executioners of divine vengeance; and were not only justified in all they did, but actually offended, and were themselves chastened, for not more entirely extirpating them, root and branch. They would not however have been justified, if they had, from love of conquest, and thirst of dominion, carried on such bloody wars against any nation, not expressly included in their commission: their conduct therefore can form no precedent to others, nor in the least excuse the murder and rapine, which mad ambition hath in all ages been committing. The Lord was pleased in this solemn transaction, not only to shew his abhorrence of sin; but, by such an example of executing vengeance upon guilty nations, to teach all that regard the Scriptures, the real cause of those more ordinary calamities, with which in the course of his providence he punishes one kingdom after another for their sins.

V. 7. *Fewest of all*, &c.] The Lord chose the people of Israel in the single person of Abraham; (*Isaiah*, li. 2:) from him they were multiplied to seventy persons, when they went down into Egypt; and though they were very numerous in proportion when he brought them forth thence, yet much less numerous than other more ancient nations; and probably less numerous than either the Egyptians from whom they were delivered, or the Canaanites whose land they inherited.

15 And the LORD will take away from thee all ſickneſs, and will put none of the evil diſeaſes of Egypt, which thou knoweſt, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee.

16 And thou ſhalt conſume all the people which the LORD thy God ſhall deliver thee; thine eye ſhall have no pity upon them; neither ſhalt thou ſerve their gods; for that *will be* a ſnare unto thee.

17 If thou ſhalt ſay in thine heart, Theſe nations *are* more than I, how can I diſpoſſeſs them?

18 Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them; *but* ſhalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt:

19 The great temptations which thine eyes ſaw, and the ſigns and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the ſtretched-out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out; ſo ſhall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

20 Moreover the LORD thy God will ſend the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themſelves from thee, be deſtroyed.

21 Thou ſhalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible.

22 And the LORD thy God will put out thoſe nations before thee by little and little: thou mayeſt not conſume them at once, leſt the beaſts of the field increaſe upon thee.

23 But the LORD thy God ſhall deliver them unto thee, and ſhall deſtroy them with a mighty deſtruction, until they be deſtroyed.

24 And he ſhall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou ſhalt deſtroy their name from under heaven; there ſhall no man be able to ſtand before thee, until thou have deſtroyed them.

25 The graven images of their gods ſhall ye burn with fire; thou ſhalt not deſire the ſilver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, leſt thou be ſnared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God.

26 Neither ſhalt thou bring an abomination into thy houſe, leſt thou be a curſed thing like it: *but* thou ſhalt utterly deteſt it, and thou ſhalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a curſed thing.

CHAP.

V. 15. *All ſickneſs*, &c.] That is, all *peſtilential diſeaſes*, which make ſuch dreadful havock at ſome times and in ſome places: ſo that the Iſraelites would, if obedient, have been only ſubject to the ordinary maladies of fallen man, and generally very healthy and long-lived. This muſt be referred to the national covenant: for though godlineſs commonly ſecures the moſt ſolid temporal advantages; yet neither among us, nor them, were temporal bleſſings uniformly diſpenſed to individuals according to their obedience. But they were to Iſrael *as a nation*, and with an exactneſs which is not obſerved towards other nations; for they were under a peculiar covenant.

V. 22. *The Lord*, &c.] The Iſraelites were required to attempt the immediate and entire extirpation of the devoted nations; as far as ſloth, cowardice, unbelief, or other corrupt motives, induced them to ſpare them, they ſinned; and to puniſh this and their other ſins, as well as to prove them, the Lord was pleaſed to permit many of theſe nations to remain among them (*Judg.* ii. 1—3. iii. 1—4.) His conduct was the reſult of a ſettled plan; but this plan, being ſecret from them, was neither the rule of their duty nor the motive of their actions. Thus he commands the entire mortification of every ſin, which is our rule of duty; and yet he gives intimations that ſin is never totally deſtroyed in this world even in the beſt of ſaints: but it actually prevails much more in moſt of us, than it would, were we watchful and diligent, as we ought to be. In all this, the Lord acts according to the counſel of his own will: but the counſel being ſecret from us, forms no excuſe; as it is in no degree the cauſe or reaſon of our ſloth and negligence, which he therefore rebukes and chaſtens.

V. 25. *Nor take*, &c.] In deteſtation of idolatry, as utterly ſpoiling the moſt precious things which had been thus abuſed, the Lord gave his worſhippers this ſelf-denying command, totally to deſtroy even the metals of the graven images.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All the commandments of God are equally the reſult of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, but not equally level to our comprehenſion and ſuited to our ideas. Aſſured therefore that the *righteous* Lord will not do *unrighteouſly*, but that he will exerciſe his abſolute ſovereignty with perfect equity, whether we can perceive it or no; when he commands, it is our buſineſs, not to object or diſpute, but to obey; and this is the never failing effect of true and ſtrong faith. (Notes, &c. *Gen.* xxii.)—As the rebellion, ingratitude, and wickedneſs of man are ſo atrocious, it is more admirable that ſo many are ſpared, than that others are puniſhed: and a proper underſtanding of the evil of ſin, and of the myſtery of a crucified Saviour, will enable us to perceive ſomewhat of the juſtice of God in all the puniſhments, temporal and eternal, which he inflicts. We ſhould however be thankful not to be employed as executioners of his vengeance, but rather as the meſſengers of his love and compaſſion. *We* are called to exerciſe

CHAP. VIII.

Contains exhortations and cautions, enforced by arguments drawn from the Lord's former dealings with the Israelites, and the good land intended for them; from the dangers they would be exposed to; and from the consequences of disobedience, 1—20.

ALL the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.

3 And

exercise *our* severity against our own lusts: with these enemies of the Lord we must wage mortal war, and give them no quarter. Nor need we fear the strongest and most domineering of them, or of their allies the powers of darkness: he who first redeemed us from our original bondage, will, as a mighty and terrible one, fight for us until they are all destroyed. Yet it will be *by little and little* that we shall extirpate them; nor must we expect that the conflict will cease, till we drop our bodies in the grave. The more need therefore have we to live by faith; to watch and pray, and be diligent: and the more do we so, the less will our sins prevail, or interrupt our enjoyments in religion.—Not our merit, or loveliness, but the Lord's free love of us, (of which he hath shewn us no reason, but because he would love us and choose us for Christ's sake,) forms the source of our redemption, and of all our consequent blessings: that reason still continues, and "he will never leave us, nor "forsake us."—But if we belong to this chosen remnant, which hitherto hath been the fewest of all people, (the Lord increase their numbers an hundred fold!) we shall by this consideration be induced to render him the more unreserved, disinterested, and self-denying obedience, to the contempt of gold and every earthly good, when they come in competition with his precept, or his glory. And should we ever be tempted in covetousness to do otherwise, we shall soon find that we have brought an accursed thing, and an abomination, into our house, which must be cast out with abhorrence, if we would not be an accursed thing like unto it. For the Lord is no more slack in repaying them that hate him, than willing to shew mercy to them who love him and keep his commandments: nor will he be more severe with any, than with covetous, fraudulent, hypocritical professors.—We cannot be too compassionate to the persons of sinners, but we may easily be too *complaisant* to them: nor can we stand too much aloof from intimacies or alliances with unbelievers; for that hath ever been and ever must be a snare to the people of God.—All occasions of sin must be shunned; for our hearts are so inflammable, that we should fear every spark which may light upon them: nor can we be losers by renouncing such sources of gain as expose us to temptations which experience shews to be too strong for us. For if we are chosen to be a special and holy people unto the Lord our God, above all the people of the earth, we shall certainly be blessed above all people: (14:) and we shall experience the present sweetness of this blessedness, in proportion to the number and value of those things, which we renounce for Christ's sake; as he hath promised his suffering disciples "an hundred-fold more in this present world, and "in the world to come everlasting life."

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *To humble*, &c.] The Israelites were *proved*, in order that they might be *humbled*. They were not previously aware of the wickedness of their own hearts, and never suspected themselves to be capable of such crimes as they actually committed: but the Lord well knew all their latent evil propensities; and for their good, and that of multitudes in every age to the end of the world, he was pleased to put them to the proof; that upon a full and fair trial their real character might be ascertained. They were therefore led through a variety of difficult circumstances, and were favoured by manifold miraculous evidences of the Lord's special presence with them, and regard to them. They were sometimes crossed, at other times indulged: they were brought into dangers and straits, and miraculously delivered: they were disappointed in many of their expectations, and favoured in many things beyond expectation: they were sometimes severely punished for their sins, that they might take warning; and at other times mercifully pardoned, that they might take courage. But the result of the trial undeniably was, that they were ever prone to be unbelieving, to distrust, to murmur, and to be ungrateful: they were invariably disposed to depreciate their mercies, and to magnify their trials and difficulties as intolerable and insuperable; to limit the power and suspect the loving-kindness of the Lord, after all their experience of both; to lust, envy, and rebel; to mutiny, apostatize, and revert to idolatry. In short it appeared that they were so stiff-necked and hard-hearted, that no patience, but the infinite patience of God, could have borne with them: nor could they be restrained from the most desperate rebellions, but by the terrible examples of thousands struck dead by the avenging hand of divine justice. All this had a direct tendency upon recollection to convert their self-admiration into self-abhorrence: to abate their self-confidence; to render them sensible of their guilt, folly, and weakness; and to bring them to a suitable conviction of their entire dependence upon the mercy of the Lord for every thing, and their manifold obligations to him for his goodness to them in times past; and finally to produce, and preserve, that poverty of spirit, which is radically necessary to the life of faith and the walk with God.—They should likewise be considered as a fair specimen of human nature: any other people, any individual, proved as they were, would appear as vile as they do, were the result as impartially recorded. And every one's own experience will have the same effect upon him; except he view himself through a false medium, or be lulled asleep in carelessness, or intoxicated by pride: for we none of us live one week, without renewed evi-

dences

3 And he humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou kneweſt not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot ſwell, theſe forty years.

5 Thou ſhalt alſo conſider in thine heart, that, as a man chaſteneth his ſon, *ſo* the LORD thy God chaſteneth thee.

6 Therefore thou ſhalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that ſpring out of valleys and hills;

8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey;

9 A land wherein thou ſhalt eat bread without ſcarceneſs, thou ſhalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whoſe ſtones *are* iron, and out of whoſe hills thou mayeſt dig braſs.

10 When thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the LORD thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee.

11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Leſt, *when* thou haſt eaten and art full, and haſt built goodly houſes, and dwelt *therein*;

13 And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou haſt is multiplied;

14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage;

15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderneſs, *wherein were* fiery ſerpents, and ſcorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

16 Who fed thee in the wilderneſs with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

17 And thou ſay in thine heart, My power, and the might of *mine* hand, hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou ſhalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may eſtabliſh his covenant, which he ſware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

19 And it ſhall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and ſerve them, and worſhip them, I teſtify againſt you this day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh.

20 As the nations which the LORD deſtroyeth

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dences of our own weakneſs, folly, and depravity.

V. 3. *He ſuffered*, &c.] When all ordinary means of ſuſtenance failed, and the people muſt have periſhed with hunger, at the word of the Lord the manna came, and afforded them a ſuitable, ſufficient, and conſtant ſupply. Their frequent murmurs and ingratitude, and their inability to help themſelves, would upon recollection humble them: and the unexpected method, in which they were provided for, would teach them that the Lord is not tied to ordinary means, and that they need not uſe ſinful methods of obtaining the neceſſaries of life; for when he ſpeaks the word, a ſupply will be ſent in one way or other; and that word alone ought to be depended on; (*Matt.* iv. 4.)

V. 4. *Thy raiment*, &c.] The Iſraelites probably brought out of Egypt more raiment than what they had upon them; they might manufacture the fleeces of their flocks in the wilderneſs, and they were remarkably favoured in God's providence with other ſupplies: yet when we conſider their immenſe numbers, their ſituation and long continuance in the wilderneſs, and the expreſſions here made uſe of, there ſeems no reaſon to queſtion the conſtant miraculous interpoſition of God in this reſpect, as well as in others. We may however ſafely reject the Jewiſh tradition, that the garments grew along with the bodies of the young people: not becauſe it is too difficult to be credited; but becauſe it wants the warrant of ſcriptural teſtimony, and does not appear to have been at all neceſſary.

V. 5. *That as a man*, &c.] The puniſhments inflicted upon the Iſraelites, though deſtructive to individuals, were intended for national bleſſings, ſalutary to the ſurvivors, and tending to their warning, preſervation, and proſperity: even as the father chaſtiſes his ſon, not for his hurt, but that he may be warned, eſcape ruin, and be wiſe and happy.

V. 9. *Whoſe ſtones*, &c.] We do not find that in this land of promiſe, the glory of all lands, there were any mines of gold or ſilver. Theſe, though more coveted, are much leſs uſeful,

ſtroyeth before your face, ſo ſhall ye periſh; becauſe ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. An aſſurance of victory to Iſrael, not for their righteouſneſs, but through the wickedneſs of their enemies, 1—6. *2d. A memorial of their rebellions, and of the Lord's mercies,* 7—29.

HEAR, O Iſrael; Thou *art* to paſs over Jordan this day, to go in to poſſeſs nations greater and mightier than thyſelf, cities great, and fenced up to heaven.

2 A people great and tall, the children of the

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uſeful, than iron and braſs. The abundant bleſſedneſs of God's people doth not conſiſt in thoſe things which man naturally moſt covets; but in thoſe which are really moſt valuable.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our obedience cannot be deemed *ſincere*, unleſs we "*obſerve* to do all the commandments of the Lord;" for whilſt any one is broken, *with allowance and habitually*, that ſingle diſobedience is a more concluſive proof of hypocriſy, than all the reſt can be of juſtifying faith. In order to ſinful man's rendering to God this kind of ſincere obedience, he muſt be *humbled* and *proved*, and made ſenſible of his weakneſs, folly, guilt, pollution, and miſery. And when the ſevereſt chaſtenings, the greateſt diſtreſſes, and the moſt painful experiences are made effectual to produce this conviction; they are evidences of ſpecial love, and of the Lord's merciful intention of doing us good at the latter end, which ſhould reconcile us to them, and make us thankful for them. Indeed it is impoſſible that we can truly repent, or exerciſe faith in Chriſt, and love to him; or become meek, patient, and forgiving; or attain to any part of the Chriſtian temper and character, without ſuch humiliation: for to broken-hearted ſouls alone is the Saviour precious indeed. Nor do any behave ſuitably in proſperity, without much previous humbling diſcipline of one kind or other: far more requiſite then are ſuch trials in training us up for that good land which Canaan typified. Nothing indeed can render even the moſt ſuitable outward diſpenſations and inward exerciſes, effectual for theſe ends, without the ſanctifying influences of the Spirit of God: but it is our duty to be much employed in remembering all the way in which the Lord hath led us; in recollecting the evidences which we have abundantly given of our own ingratitude and perverſeneſs, and of the deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of our hearts; and in conſidering the proofs we have had of the Lord's power and love, in ſupplying our wants, extricating us out of difficulties, preventing the bad effects of our miſconduct, and over-ruling for our good, events which appeared fraught with ruin and deſtruction. Hence we may learn to ceaſe from ſelf-confidence, and to truſt in the mercy, grace, and providence of God for every thing: hence may we draw arguments againſt ſin, and motives to obedience: and hence may we learn to watch againſt pride, unbelief, and forgetfulneſs of God; with many other leſſons equally ſalutary.—The food, which the Lord brings for us out of the earth, the water from the clouds, and the raiment new from year to year which he provides, cannot call for leſs gratitude from us, than the miraculous proviſion did from Iſrael: though he do not ſuffer us previouſly to hunger, nor confine us to the ſame proviſion, but indulges us in a vaſt variety which he was pleaſed to deny them.—The word of the Lord firſt gave, and ſtill continues, to the earth its fertility: his bleſſing cauſes our food to nouriſh us; and did he command the air to ſuſtain us, it would be equally obedient: he appoints the meaſure of our ſupport, however it be ſent; and his promiſe, that they who truſt in him ſhall want no manner of thing that is good, is our only ſecurity for a future ſufficient ſupply, till we arrive at our journey's end.—But in this the believing poor have the advantage: they more eaſily perceive their proviſion coming from the Lord in anſwer to the prayer of faith, and find leſs difficulty in ſimply truſting him for daily bread: ſo that they taſte a ſweetneſs in it generally unknown to the affluent, whilſt they are exempt from many of their temptations. For when men poſſeſs large eſtates, or are engaged in extenſive and productive commerce; or when their herds and flocks, and gold and ſilver are multiplied, they find it very difficult to expect, and receive, their daily bread in a way of ſimple dependence, prayer, and thankfulneſs; to remember that the Lord alone gives them the power to get wealth, to give him all the praiſe, and to uſe it all to his glory. When "they have eaten and are full, and "have built goodly houſes, and dwelt therein," they will find the temptation to pride, to forgetfulneſs of God, and to carnal-mindedneſs, very ſtrong: they will be apt to fail in reducing to practice the humbling leſſons which they had before learned; and will be prone to grow careleſs, to ſpend their riches upon themſelves, to take them for their portion, and to neglect the one thing needful. This is a "ſlippery place," whence many are "caſt down into "deſtruction;" (*Pſalm* lxxiii. 18;) let thoſe who are placed on it "rejoice with trembling:" and let them watch and pray always, that they may eſcape the fate of thoſe multitudes, who have "utterly periſhed," through their proſperity. Let us all be ſober and vigilant, and perſevere in prayer, for we tread a dangerous path; let us rather chooſe, and beg of God, to be chaſtened with his children, than to be left to grow ſecure in ſin with his enemies: and may we be taught to hunger after, and feaſt upon the hidden manna, and to drink of the waters of life from the wells of ſalvation: and may we with alacrity be prompt to ſelf-denying obedience encouraged by the proſpect before our eyes, of the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that "fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for all, who are here "kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation."

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *Hear*, &c.] It is generally ſuppoſed that Moſes here began a new diſcourſe; which he introduced, as he had done the firſt, with a recapitulation of the hiſtory of Iſrael, and afterwards in the following chapters practically applied it to their conſciences. But in the former diſcourſe he *mainly* expatiated on the wonderful works of God; in this he dwells *chiefly* upon the wicked works of Iſrael.—By *this day*, is meant, that the long expected time was juſt at hand.

the Anakims, whom thou knoweſt, and *of whom* thou haſt heard *ſay*, Who can ſtand before the children of Anak?

3 Underſtand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee *as* a conſuming fire; he ſhall deſtroy them, and he ſhall bring them down before thy face: ſo ſhalt thou drive them out, and deſtroy them quickly, as the LORD hath ſaid unto thee.

4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath caſt them out from before thee, ſaying, For my righteouſneſs the LORD hath brought me in to poſſeſs this land; but for the wickedneſs of theſe nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

5 Not for thy righteouſneſs, or for the uprightneſs of thine heart, doſt thou go to poſſeſs their land; but for the wickedneſs of theſe nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob.

6 Underſtand therefore that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to poſſeſs it, for thy righteouſneſs; for thou *art* a ſtiff-necked people.

7 Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedſt the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderneſs: from the day that thou didſt depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious againſt the LORD.

8 Alſo in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, ſo that the LORD was angry with you, to have deſtroyed you.

9 When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of ſtone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights; I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of ſtone, written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words which the LORD ſpake with you in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire, in the day of the aſſembly.

11 And it came to paſs at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of ſtone, *even* the tables of the covenant.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou haſt brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themſelves:* they are quickly turned aſide out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

13 Furthermore, the LORD ſpake unto me ſaying, I have ſeen this people, and, behold, it *is* a ſtiff-necked people.

14 Let me alone, that I may deſtroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.

15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands.

16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had ſinned againſt the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aſide quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

17 And I took the two tables, and caſt them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the firſt, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread nor drink water, becauſe of all your ſins which ye ſinned, in doing wickedly in the ſight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

19 (For

V. 18. *Becauſe*, &c.] The tranſgreſſions of the people rendered this ſecond forty days faſting neceſſary. Though the pardon was ſolicited, and in ſome ſenſe obtained, before Moſes aſcended the mount; yet probably much of the time, which he ſpent there, was employed in ſupplication for them; and when he deſcended the ſecond time with the tables of the law in his hands, the pardon was as it were ratified and ſealed.—Some indeed ſuppoſe that he faſted three times, forty days each; but it is not probable, nor doth there appear any ſufficient reaſon from the narration to conclude that he did. The twenty-fifth verſe is a reſumption of the ſubject after a digreſſion, ſuch as are commonly found, where the heart is much engaged, and the ſpeaker is more ſolicitous to impreſs the hearers for their

19 (For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you.) But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and* ground *it* very small, *even* until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

23 Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin;

28 Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

29 Yet

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their good, than to gain their applause. The apostle Paul's epistles abound in such digressions, which sometimes obscure the sense to the inattentive reader. As this chapter is mainly an abridgment of the foregoing history, the reader must be referred to the comment on those chapters which are here alluded to. (Notes, &c. *Exod.* xxiv. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv. *Numb.* xi. xiii. xiv.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who enlist under the Lord's standard, must not despise their enemies, nor yet be intimidated on account of them. In themselves they are very formidable; but not at all to be dreaded by those who have the almighty arm engaged on their side. Yet we should count our cost, and consider what our vocation will certainly expose us to, lest we should turn back in the day of battle; (Notes, &c. *Luke* xiv. 25—33:) for unless we so value the salvation of the Lord, as to be willing to venture, suffer, and sacrifice every thing for the sake of it, our profession will begin with hypocrisy, and probably end in apostacy. Such soldiers the Captain of our salvation wants not, and he therefore plainly tells us what we are to expect, even in as strong language as we can use in our most desponding moments; (1, 2, *compared with* i. 27, 28.) But he proposes an all-sufficient remedy to our discouragements, when he engages to go before us as a consuming fire: in that case, hard things will become easy, and we may rejoice and triumph in our sharpest conflicts and severest trials.—But so strong is our propensity to pride, that it will creep in under one pretence or other: and if it be evident that the might of our arm hath not got us our wealth; we shall be ready to conceive that our righteousness hath merited the special favour of the Lord, and induced him to give us it; though in

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reality our wickedness be more evident than our weakness. To remove that ignorance, or forgetfulness, which occasions the increase of this absurd self-adulation, ministers must bestow pains and be willing to give offence, by declaring unto the people their transgressions; (*Isaiah* lviii. 1. *Micah* iii. 8;) and must not only lay the facts before their eyes, but call their attention to them, and assist them in drawing inferences from them, and in applying those inferences to their conviction.—When the secret history of every man's life shall be produced before him at the day of judgment, "every mouth will be stopped, and all the "world will be proved guilty before God." As we are spared in infinite mercy, we should anticipate that solemn season, and be glad of every assistance in reviewing the past experience of our lives; that judging and condemning ourselves in this world, we may not be then judged and condemned of the Lord. For at present One intercedeth for us before the mercy seat, who not only *fasted*, but *died upon the cross*, for our sins; through whom we may approach, though self-condemned sinners, and supplicate for unmerited mercy, and for eternal life *as the gift of God* in him. For his sake the Lord will grant these blessings, not for our righteousness, but for the praise of his glory, and according to the tenor of the covenant of grace: and notwithstanding that we have the verdict brought in against us by our own consciences, "that we have been rebellious" from the beginning of our lives, yea stubborn and stiff-necked; yet will he save us for his mercies' sake, write his law in our hearts, and not suffer our enemies to triumph in our destruction.—Alas! that even believers should have so many *Massahs*, and *Taberahs*, and *Kibroth-hattaavahs* to remember with shame! yet we ought not by any means to forget them; but thence to draw arguments for deeper humility,

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29 Yet they *are* thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughteſt out by thy mighty power, and by thy ſtretched-out arm.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. A recapitulation of hiſtorical events, 1—11. *2d. Practical exhortations deduced from the whole,* 12—22.

AT that time the LORD ſaid unto me, Hew thee two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.

2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the firſt tables, which thou brakeſt, and thou ſhalt put them in the ark.

3 And I made an ark *of* ſhittim-wood, and hewed two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the firſt writing; the ten commandments, which the LORD ſpake unto you in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire, in the day of the aſſembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

5 And I turned myſelf and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

6 And the children of Iſrael took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Moſera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried: and Eleazar his ſon miniſtered in the prieſt's office in his ſtead.

7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah: and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

8 At that time the LORD ſeparated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to ſtand before the LORD to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in his name, unto this day.

9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promiſed him.

10 And I ſtayed in the mount according to the firſt time, forty days and forty nights: and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time alſo, *and* the LORD would not deſtroy thee.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, take *thy* journey before the people, that they may go in and poſſeſs the land which I ſware unto their fathers to give unto them.

12 And now, Iſrael, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul.

13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

14 Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, *is* the LORD's thy God, the earth *alſo* with all that therein *is*.

15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he choſe their ſeed after

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more lively gratitude, more ſimple dependence, and more earneſt prayers for the upholding grace of God; and for a more watchful walk, and a life more devoted to ſo merciful a God and Saviour. As this conſideration ſhould endear to us the compaſſionate Interceſſor for ſinners, and induce us to deſire and value a place in the prayers of God's people: ſo ſhould we learn to compaſſionate and pray for our fellow Chriſtians, and for all men; and in meekneſs to reſtore ſuch as have been overtaken in a fault, when there are hopeful tokens of repentance.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 3. *And I made*, &c.] It does not appear that Moſes took any ark into the mount with him: and it is evident that the ark of the covenant, and not a temporary ark, was intended, (5.) The words ſeem therefore to refer to orders given, previouſly to his ſecond going up into the mount, to Bezaleel to have it prepared, and in readineſs againſt he came down again: and Moſes may be ſaid to *have made* it, as *having given orders to have it made.*

V. 6, 7.] Theſe two verſes ſo break in upon the connection of Moſes's diſcourſe, and give ſuch an account of the names of places, as has greatly perplexed the commentators. Bleſſed be God neither our ſalvation, nor our peace, is concerned in the ſolution of ſuch difficulties. Several of the places mentioned might have more names than one: and thoſe things, which for want of further information we cannot reconcile to other accounts, might be perfectly intelligible to them whom Moſes addreſſed. It is evident, either that Moſes himſelf did not much regard exactneſs of method or connection in this diſcourſe; or, which is more probable, that by ſome means or other, a tranſpoſition hath taken place: for theſe two verſes would come in more regularly after verſe the eleventh.

V. 8. *At that time*, &c.] Not after Aaron's death, but at that time concerning which Moſes had before been ſpeaking, and of which he returned to ſpeak afterwards; namely, when the breach was made up which the golden calf had occaſioned.

V. 16.

after them, even you (above all people, as it is this day.

16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.

17 For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

21 He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen.

22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God has made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

CHAP.

V. 16. *Circumcise, &c.*] This expression denotes the mortification of our corrupt nature; the removal of that blindness from the understanding, of that perverseness from the will, and of that depravity from the affections, which prevent our supreme love of God: (Notes, &c. *Gen.* xvii.) It is therefore the subject both of promises, and of precepts. (xxx. 6.) As it is our duty to love God with our whole heart, (for this the law commands;) it must be our duty to remove all that which hinders our love of God; and we are accordingly commanded to do so. (*Ezek.* xviii. 30, 31. *Acts* iii. 19.) But we are naturally of a contrary disposition: and this contrariety to God and his law is *original sin*, the source of all our actual transgressions, and the very essence of guilt and misery; "because the carnal mind is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of "God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in "the flesh cannot please God." (*Rom* viii. 5—9.) In this condition the gospel addresses us with invitations, promises, and precepts: when we are convinced of the reasonableness and necessity of the required change, and feel our own utter inability to effect it, we have recourse to the promises. From that time, pleading them in prayer, and attending on other appointed means of grace, we wait upon, and trust in, the Lord to work it in us: nor do we ever wait and trust in vain.

V. 18. *He loveth, &c.*] The universal care and kindness of God in his Providence to persons of all nations and characters, are intended by such expressions as these. He is represented as the universal patron of all those, who are peculiarly exposed to oppression or ill treatment; as strangers are in a foreign country, of which the Israelites had had painful experience in Egypt.—They were therefore required to imitate the example of the Lord who had been so kind to them, not that of the Egyptians who had been so cruel to them.—Notwithstanding these plain precepts, the Jews in after ages were remarkable for their contempt, hatred, and ill treatment of other nations: and they deemed themselves justifiable in this conduct; which tended very much to their own ruin after the coming of Christ, as it hardened them against the gospel when it was preached to the Gentiles also.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The gospel of Christ, when truly believed, prepares the heart to receive, love, and uprightly to obey the holy law of God, in imitation of him, who said, "I delight to do

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"thy will, yea thy law is within my heart!" (*Psal.* xl. 8.) and this forms the conclusive proof that our sins are pardoned, and that God is reconciled to us. And what doth the Lord require of us even by the strictest precept of the law, as given to his redeemed people through the hands of the Mediator, which should hinder us from delighting in his service? Having received so many mercies and favours, and having such gracious promises of assistance and acceptance, we cannot say that we want either motive, ability, or encouragement for that obedience which he requires, as the evidence of our faith and the expression of our gratitude. His majesty and purity, his amiableness and excellency, his loving-kindness and mercy render it equitable and reasonable, that we should fear and love him with all our soul; and from the united influence of filial fear and love, that we should obey his commandments, worship him in his ordinances, and walk in all his ways. His commandments are also for our good, and restrain us from nothing but what is destructive of our own happiness, and that of others; and require nothing but what conduces to inward tranquillity and present comfort.—The more we obey his precepts, the nearer will be our conformity to his image, and the more we shall reflect "the beauty of "the Lord our God," the beauty of his holiness, of his equity, truth, and love; of his compassion, and condescension (though he be so highly exalted!) to the mean, to the vile, to the miserable and oppressed. And what pleasure can be so divine, what honour so exalted, what privilege so desirable, what ornament, praise, or distinction so great, as to have the God of gods, and Lord of lords for our Father, and our Friend, to walk with him, and become like him? "This honour have all his saints!" to this they are chosen, this is the fruit of his special love, the effect of his converting grace, and the earnest of his eternal glory. Having had a delight in our fathers, whom he called by his grace, he hath favoured us their posterity with his gospel, above many of the nations of the earth; he hath established and continued the ministry of his word, and hath had a remnant of true believers amongst us hitherto, (which may he increase to an innumerable multitude!) Let us then fear coming short of this great salvation; for the Lord is terrible, as well as merciful. Let us use the means, and pray earnestly for that grace, which may circumcise our hearts, and wash them from every wickedness: let us, without delay or reserve, come to him and cleave to him as our reconciled God

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The love of God enforced from the consideration of his kindness to Israel, 1—7. *2d. Exhortations to obedience, mixed with gracious promises, solemn warnings, and repeated instructions,* 8—25. *3d. A blessing and a curse set before the people, with orders to publish them from mount Gerizzim and mount Ebal,* 26—32.

THEREFORE thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway.

2 And know you this day; for *I speak* not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm;

3 And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land;

4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and *how* the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day;

5 And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place;

6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession in the midst of all Israel.

7 But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD, which he did.

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land whither ye go to possess it.

9 And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them, and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 For the land whither thou goest in to possess it *is* not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

11 But the land whither ye go to possess it, *is* a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven:

12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul,

14 That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat, and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

17 And *then* the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven that there

in Jesus Christ, that we may love, serve, and obey him acceptably; and be daily "changed into his image from "glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord."

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] *V.* 1. *Therefore, &c.*] This verse properly belongs to the foregoing chapter, and is the practical inference from the concluding words of it; whilst the next verse proceeds to another view of the subject.

V. 2. *Your children, &c.*] We may suppose that Moses addressed these words, and the verses that follow, particularly to the elders who had in their youth witnessed the wonderful works which the Lord had wrought both for them and among them; and who were therefore bound to remember them for their own warning and instruction, and to testify of them to the rising generation who had not been eye witnesses of them.

V. 10. *Watered it, &c.*] Rain seldom is known to fall in Egypt; but it is mainly watered by the inundations of the river Nile; which indeed cause great fertility, but occasion the people much labour in digging trenches, and forming conveyances for the water into the different parts of the country, as if they were watering a garden; from all which the Israelites in Canaan would be exempted.

V. 12. *A land, &c.*] These expressions imply that the fruitfulness of that favoured land arose from an especial attention of the providence of God to it as the intended residence of his people. At this day the same country is remarkably barren, that special favour being withdrawn. But we may also consider Canaan as a type of heaven, and the language here used as especially relating to that typical meaning.

V. 14. *In his due season, &c.*] Neither in too great, nor in too small proportion, nor out of season; but especially to

there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: *for* the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day;

28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known.

29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

30 *Are* they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh?

31 For ye shall pass over Jordan, to go in to

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to prepare the ground for the seed, and to bring forward the harvest.

V. 18—21.] (*Notes*, &c. vi. 6—9.)

V. 29, 30.] This ceremony is afterwards more explicitly commanded, and likewise the observance of it recorded (xxvii. *Joshua* viii. 30—35.) The appointment of it at this time was a pledge of the passage of Israel over Jordan. In this world we believe, and in part experience, that the righteous are blessed and the wicked are accursed: but beyond the grave the reality and extent of the blessing, and of the curse, will be more perfectly apprehended.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There are certain grand principles in true religion, which must be introduced upon every subject; and repetitions in this case are so necessary and becoming, that no learning, ingenuity, or eloquence can compensate for the omission of them. Such are repentance of sin; faith in Jesus Christ, with those things which relate to his person, love, atonement, and grace; regeneration; love to God and man; and the future state of punishment and eternal retributions. The more full the heart of the speaker, or of the writer, is of the good treasure (*Matt.* xii. 35. xiii. 52.) the more will he enlarge on these and similar subjects, to the edification of such as being under the influence of grace, and the operations of heavenly

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things. In one way or other these topics will be continually resumed, in connection with every doctrine that is explained, and every precept that is enforced; and as introducing the practical improvement of every mercy received, of every chastisement or judgment inflicted, of every threatening denounced, of every example, history, warning, caution, or exhortation. Such subjects must be used as the bread and salt are to all our meals, of whatever occasional topic we discourse; and they, who are duly aware of their vast importance, will watch for opportunities of introducing them, being unwilling to relinquish the hope of gaining attention from their hearers or readers to them, as to matters of indispensable necessity.—All the Lord's kindness to us, in providence, or by redemption, is intended to teach and induce our love and obedience to him; without which our faith and knowledge are vain, our hope delusion and presumption, and we must be miserable for ever. These are the sure effects of repentance and faith, the ornament of our profession, and the preparation for, and earnest of, heaven; where love, obedience, and felicity will be alike perfect.—Upon condition of such perfect love and obedience, the law of God sets before us a blessing; and in case of disobedience denounces a curse against us: but we have broken the law, and are under its curse, without remedy from ourselves. In infinite mercy the gospel

again

to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.

32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

CHAP. XII.

Contains laws repeated, explained, enacted, or enforced.

1st. Commanding the monuments of idolatry to be destroyed, 1—4. 2d. Appointing the place where sacrifices were to be offered, oblations presented, and holy things eaten; with allowance to eat flesh in other places, but without the blood, 5—28. 3d. Against imitating the Canaanites, 29—32.

THESE *are* the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.

3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds, and of your flocks.

7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

8 Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.

9 For

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again sets before us a blessing and a curse; a blessing if we obey the call to repentance, to faith in Christ, and to newness of heart and life through him; an awful curse, if we neglect so great salvation. Let us then thankfully welcome these glad tidings of great joy; and "give the more earnest "heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we "should let them slip:" let us not harden our hearts, but hear this voice of God whilst it is called to day, and whilst he so kindly invites us to come to him upon a mercy-seat. Urged on by fear of coming short, animated by hope of obtaining the prize, drawn on by love, let us "give dili-"gence to make our calling and election sure." And recollecting all that we have heard, learned, and experienced of the Lord's power, faithfulness, righteousness, and mercy, from our very youth, let us bear testimony of them to the rising generation: let us make them the subject of our daily converse, and endeavour to bequeath them as a legacy to our children after us; that they, as well as we, may be "strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," encouraged in "fighting the good fight of faith," and made conquerors over every enemy; and may obtain an inheritance in that better land, which the eyes of the Lord watch over, and the glory of the Lord shineth upon, and beautifieth, to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 2, 3.] As among these monuments of idolatry no mention is made of *temples*, it is probable that the tabernacle in the wilderness was the first building ever formed as an habitation for the Deity; and that a misunderstanding of its meaning and intention gave rise to that custom in after ages. (Note, *Exod.* xxv. 8.) Before this they seem to have worshipped in *high* or in *shady* places, as favourable to contemplation, or as supposed peculiarly sacred to the Deity, which custom was in many countries retained long afterwards.

[V. 5—7.] The people had before been directed to bring all their sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle. (*Lev.* xvii. 1—9.) But at this time the general command was particularly explained with reference to their situation in the promised land, and was expatiated upon in a manner, which evinced that it was considered as a matter of the first importance. (1.) Idolatry and superstition would be prevented, and the true Object and prescribed method of worship adhered to, when all their sacrifices were offered at the same place, by the priests appointed for that purpose. (2.) Brotherly love, and harmony in religion would be promoted by these constant opportunities of meeting together from every part of the land, and joining in the sacred institutions. And (3.) The temple, sacrifices, priests, and especially the ark of the covenant, were typical of Christ, through whom alone God can be acceptably worshipped by sinners. Where the ark was situated, God would accept sacrifices but in ordinary cases no where else. Yet prayer and praise might be offered any where, with reference to the sacrifices at the altar, and the sprinkling of the blood before the ark. The place was not at this time appointed, that was left to be done after the people had got possession of the land: accordingly Shiloh was long the appointed place, and afterwards Jerusalem.

V. 8. *Ye shall not do*, &c.] The ceremonial observances were interrupted in the wilderness, by the want of many things requisite to the due performance of them, when the people had no corn-fields, vineyards, or olive-yards; or by their constant

9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;

11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD.

12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

13 Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest:

14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roe-buck, and as of the hart.

16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.

17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds, or of thy flock; nor any of thy vows which thou vowest; nor thy free-will offerings, or heave-offering of thy hand:

18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth.

20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, (because thy soul longeth to eat flesh,) thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.

21 If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee; then thou shalt kill of thy herd, and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.

22 Even as the roe-buck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them; the unclean and the clean shall eat *of* them alike.

23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

24 Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.

25 Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well

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stant removals from place to place.—But it is plain that in the best of times hitherto many things have been neglected, or defective in the church of God; and that the typical meaning of these institutions was the principal intention of them: for they never were very exactly observed in any age of the Jewish church, except it were in the days of Joshua, and for a short time after his death.

V. 17, 18.] This must mean the *second tithe*; (xiv. 23—29;) for the Levites were wholly to receive the other; (*Num.* xviii. 20—32.) Somewhat of the same kind seems to have been the case, in respect of the *firstlings* here mentioned; for every male firstling was to be eaten by the priests only. (*Num.* xviii. 17, 18.) Either the female firstlings,

or some other of the young cattle, being presented as peace-offerings, might thus to be feasted on before the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot serve God and mammon, nor worship the true God and idols, nor depend upon Christ Jesus and superstitious or self-righteous confidences. No coalition ought so much as to be attempted in these cases.—True religion springs from the subversion of every false dependence, and the dethroning of every idol, and tends to the total extirpation of all rivals and opponents; that the Lord may be our only portion and salvation, and receive all our worship and obedience. Nor can we ever approach the Lord with acceptance, but in a way of his revealing, and

well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou ſhalt do *that which is* right in the ſight of the LORD.

26 Only thy holy things, which thou haſt, and thy vows, thou ſhalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD ſhall chooſe.

27 And thou ſhalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the fleſh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy ſacrifices ſhall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou ſhalt eat the fleſh.

28 Obſerve and hear all theſe words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doeſt *that which is* good and right in the ſight of the LORD thy God.

29 When the LORD thy God ſhall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs them, and thou ſucceedeſt them, and dwelleſt in their land;

30 Take heed to thyſelf that thou be not ſnared by following them, after that they be deſtroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, ſaying, How did theſe nations ſerve their gods? even ſo will I do likewiſe.

31 Thou ſhalt not do ſo unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth, have they done unto their gods: for even their ſons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

32 What thing ſoever I command you, obſerve to do it: thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains the law for the puniſhment of thoſe who tempted the Iſraelites to idolatry, or were themſelves guilty of it; in the caſe, 1ſt. Of a falſe prophet, 1—5. *2d. Of a near relation,* 6—11. *3d. Of a whole city,* 12—18.

IF there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder;

2 And the ſign or the wonder come to paſs whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods, which thou haſt not known, and let us ſerve them:

3 Thou ſhalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know

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is ordinances of his appointing; for our wiſdom or imagination are not in the leaſt to be truſted in matters of this nature. In Chriſt Jeſus, as in the true temple, "all the ful-"neſs of the Godhead dwells bodily." To him we come by humble faith, and receive the pardon, the reconciliation, and the grace, which he beſtows from his mercy-ſeat: thus we learn to love him, to obey his commandments, and to preſent our ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, and of every work of compaſſion and kindneſs performed for his ſake. There we find acceptance of our imperfect ſervices, and learn to take delight in obedience; for the ways of our reconciled Father are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all his paths are peace: and our inward ſatisfaction will be augmented in proportion as we abound in love and good works, which ſpring from faith and the in-dwelling Spirit of Chriſt. But we muſt not be ſatisfied with that meaſure of diligence which paſſes current even in the church of God itſelf; where too often many allow themſelves, and are connived at by others, in doing whatſoever is right in their own eyes: but we ſhould look to the law of God, and conſider what it requires; we ſhould remember thoſe primitive times, when great grace was upon all the company of Chriſtians, and reflect how they lived; and we ſhould by faith contemplate thoſe who have arrived at their reſt and inheritance, and endeavour to conceive how they love, rejoice in, and ſerve the Lord, and be preſſing forward after ſuch perfection.—If we would have a comfortable uſe of our poſſeſſions, and be happy in domeſtic life, we muſt honour God with our ſubſtance, worſhip him in our families, and train up our children and ſervants to attend upon all his ordinances. Nay, "whether we eat, "or drink, or whatever we do," we are commanded "to do "all to the glory of God:" this cannot be done without obſerving the rules of ſtrict temperance, and ſubmiſſion to God's providence, in our freeſt uſe of his good creatures; nor without having all ſanctified by the word of God and prayer; nor without ſeparating a portion for the poor, and for the proviſion of ſuch, who labour in the word and doctrine, ſeek not an inheritance of temporal things among their brethren, and may not be forgotten by them. We muſt likewiſe "do all in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, "giving thanks to the Father through him:" and exerciſe in every thing that dominion over our appetites, which becomes his diſciples, and thoſe who ſavour heavenly things. We ought alſo to watch with circumſpection, leſt we ſhould be enſnared by the examples, maxims, faſhions, and perſuaſions of the world; and we muſt not yield at all to them, or they will draw us into further abominations. But whatſoever the Lord commands, that muſt we obſerve and do, without adding to it, or diminiſhing from it, that it may be well with us, and with our children after us for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—3.] That which is once *demonſtrated* to be true, can by no evidence be ſhewn to be falſe. The grand principles of religion may be demonſtrated to be true: the exiſtence of God, from the exiſtence of the creation; and the fundamentals of revealed religion from the external and internal evidences by which revelation is confirmed.

know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your ſoul.

4 Ye ſhall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye ſhall ſerve him and cleave unto him.

5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams ſhall be put to death, (becauſe he hath ſpoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the houſe of bondage, to thruſt thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in,) ſo ſhalt thou put the evil away from the midſt of thee.

6 If thy brother, the ſon of thy mother, or thy ſon or thy daughter, or the wife of thy boſom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own ſoul, entice thee ſecretly, ſaying, Let us go and ſerve other gods, which thou haſt not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7 *Namely*, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth, even unto the *other* end of the earth;

8 Thou ſhalt not conſent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither ſhall thine eye pity him, neither ſhalt thou ſpare, neither ſhalt thou conceal him;

9 But thou ſhalt ſurely kill him; thine hand ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10 And thou ſhalt ſtone him with ſtones, that he die; becauſe he hath ſought to thruſt thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought

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confirmed. Unleſs theſe evidences could be ſhewn inſufficient, all objections are futile or malicious: though (as in the caſe of an incendiary,) malevolence may more eaſily do miſchief, than benevolence can retard or counteract its effects. We ſhould be ſo far from liſtening to the ſophiſtical reaſonings of atheiſts or infidels, againſt the plain truths and precepts of Scripture; that even miracles ought not *in this caſe* to be noticed. The revelation given by Moſes to the Iſraelites had been *ſufficiently authenticated*: it eſpecially required them to truſt, love, and ſerve Jehovah alone, to the excluſion of all other objects of faith and worſhip.—Some parts of the revelation then given, being of another nature, might hereafter by the ſame authority be altered, to make way for a fuller diſcovery of divine truth, and a more enlarged diſpenſation: this alſo would be introduced and authenticated by miracles. But the firſt principles before mentioned were immutable in their nature and obligation; and no miracles might be admitted in oppoſition to them. We are too much in the dark to determine, *in all caſes*, how far created power can reach, and where the effect can only be produced by the power of God. It is I think undeniable that Satan, if permitted, could produce alterations in the ordinary courſe of nature, which would appear to us miraculous: and it is intimated in the New Teſtament, as well as in this place, that in ſome caſes he hath had ſuch a permiſſion granted him; (*Matt.* xxiv. 24. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9. *Rev.* xiii. 13—15:) though we may ſuppoſe, that there was always an obſervable difference between theſe ſatanical deluſions and true miracles, provided the perſons concerned were properly diſpoſed to note it. We may be ſure that this enemy of God and holineſs will never interpoſe to ſupport a doctrine, of which the evident tendency is to ſubvert his own kingdom of darkneſs and wickedneſs; (*Matt.* xii. 24—30:) and we may ſafely conclude, that in difficult caſes, in which an upright enquirer might be miſled, God will never permit him thus to intrude. But at the ſame time, we may allow, that the Lord, in order to prove his profeſſing people, whether they really love his truth, worſhip, and ſervice, and to diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe who do and thoſe who do not, hath been, and ſtill may be, pleaſed to permit Satan to imitate his divine operations in different ways. (2 *Theſſ.* ii. 10—12.) In all caſes however, where the evident teſtimony of authenticated revelation is not contradicted, or evaded, miracles muſt be conſidered as the ſeal of heaven atteſting the doctrine in proof of which they are wrought: but when the doctrine militates againſt the evident principles of ſuch revelation, we are to recollect, that the Lord our God proves us, whether we love him or not. This ſtatement, which I truſt is ſcriptural, would guide the upright believer, who kept cloſe to the written word and the throne of grace, through every perplexity, even when true miracles might be expected, and falſe miracles were permitted. But the revelation of God's truth and will ſeems to be now completed, and the cloſing diſpenſation introduced: all miracles therefore, pretended to be wrought in favour of any alteration in it, or addition to it, or by any perſons in favour of their own ſenſe impoſed on it, in defect of other arguments, ſhould be rejected as impoſtures of men, or deluſions of Satan. Nor have we reaſon to expect any more miracles, except the Lord ſhould ſee them needful or ſuitable in the future deſtruction of Antichriſt, the converſion of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; or on ſome ſuch extraordinary occaſion. The pretended miracles of the Roman church, wrought in favour of idolatry and ſuperſtition, are only ſo many proofs, that that church is the grand antichriſt foretold in Scripture: and all pretences to *impreſſions*, *viſions*, or *dreams*, as far as they are adduced in proof of any particular tenets, weaken the ſcriptural proof of them, if of ſuch they are capable, and diſgrace and oppoſe the cauſe which they are brought to ſupport. The more the true Chriſtian diſregards the charge of enthuſiaſm, beſtowed upon him for his profeſſed belief and experience of the teaching, ſanctifying, and comforting influences of the Holy Ghoſt, according to the word of God; the more carefully ſhould he ſhun, and proteſt againſt all appearances of real enthuſiaſm, which is pregnant with impoſture and deluſion, and gives ſuch cauſe

brought thee out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.

11 And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

12 If thou shalt hear *say* in one of thy cities which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying,

13 *Certain* men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, (which ye have not known:)

14 Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently: and, behold, *if it be* truth, *and* the thing certain, *that* such abomination is wrought among you:

15 Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again.

17 And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers;

18 When thou shalt hearken to the voice

9 For

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cause to the enemies of religion to stumble and to blaspheme.

V. 6—11.] By this law every Israelite was bound *in conscience* to prosecute, to inform against, and to assist at the execution of any one, though a near relation, who attempted to persuade him to idolatry. Yet it is observable that parents and husbands are not mentioned in the list of those who were to be thus accused: perhaps out of deference to the divine appointment of authority and subordination in families. This law would powerfully operate to fill the minds of the Israelites with abhorrence of idolatry; and render every one afraid of harbouring a thought which he could not disclose to his nearest relation without risking his life. Israel was under a peculiar covenant, of which idolatry was the grand forfeiture: this could not be prevented from becoming a national sin, unless individuals, or even cities, that were guilty of it, were punished by public authority. They were in a special manner under the government of God as a nation, and this crime was as it were high treason. They were also a single nation surrounded by idolaters, and prone themselves to idolatry in a surprising degree. These reasons for punishing this crime by death do not now exist; and there is no command, nor precedent in the New Testament, in support of magistrates using the sword of public justice, in punishing their subjects for matters *merely* of conscience towards God, nor does it seem at all to accord with the spirit of Christianity. Much less can this authorise persecution in its larger sense: the Israelites were not commanded, nor even *allowed*, to punish *idolaters as such*, but merely *apostates from the worship of the true God to idolatry, within the limits of their own nation;* nor were they required to propagate the worship of Jehovah and true religion by any such methods; which ought to be left untouched by the servants of God for the sole use of his enemies.

V. 12—18.] *Children of Belial* are those *children of rebellion*, who cast off the yoke of the Lord and of his law; and it is another name for the *children of the wicked one*, who first cast off the yoke of obedience to the Creator, and aspired to absolute independence. (2 *Cor.* vi. 15.) If such a case arose as is here described, the magistrates and people were required to investigate it fairly; that it might be fully proved before so terrible an execution took place: and if any person remained uninfected with the general contagion, they would doubtless be allowed to separate themselves, and probably some time would be allowed them for repentance. But afterwards the whole city, with all its inhabitants, and all its riches, were as an accursed thing to be utterly destroyed: and this would prove that the private accusation, and public execution were the effect of zeal for God, and not of covetousness, which might have been suspected, had the persons employed seized upon any of the spoil. We never read of this law having been carried into execution; and have reason to think that neglect of it was a national sin which hastened the Babylonish captivity. Had some mortified limbs been cut off, the life of the state might have been prolonged.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is of vast importance for us to be well acquainted with the truths and precepts of revelation, and firmly established in them: for we may expect to be proved, not ony with that trial of our faith, which requires us to suffer or to renounce our worldly interest for conscience-sake; but by being exposed to such plausible temptations, as "Satan, "transformed into an angel of light," can set before us, to impose upon us with evil in the guise of good, of error in the appearance of truth; nor can any thing be effectually opposed to such temptations, but a plain express testimony of God's word to the contrary. In order to render such temptations more dangerous, our crafty foe will send them to us by persons, whom we have been accustomed to look up to, as superiors, teachers, and men of God; or by those for whom we entertain the most tender affection: the former we can scarcely think capable of deceiving, or of being deceived; to the latter we can hardly find in our hearts to refuse any request. But we must remember, that in all this the Lord our God doth prove us. He is our Father and Teacher, and we must in this sense call no man Father upon earth; if the servant therefore contradicts the Lord, we must believe the latter, and not the former.—The love of God, and the duty which we owe to him, are so immensely

of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments, which I command thee this day, to do *that which is* right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Laws repeated concerning Israel's distinction from other nations, in their mourning, and in their diet, 1—21. *2d. A law concerning their tithing their increase,* &c. 22—29.

YE *are* the children of the LORD your God. Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes, for the dead:

2 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

4 These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat.

5 The hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.

6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, *and* cheweth the cud among the beasts; that ye shall eat.

7 Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; *as* the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; *therefore* they *are* unclean unto you.

8 And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it *is* unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.

9 These ye shall eat of all that *are* in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat.

10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it *is* unclean unto you.

11 *Of* all clean birds ye shall eat.

12 But these *are they* of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,

13 And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,

14 And every raven after his kind,

15 And

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mensely superior to all other obligations, that we must act even towards our dearest friends, as though we mortally hated them, when his command or his glory requires it; (*Luke* xiv. 26.) If then the offending relative might not be spared or pitied, but must be put to death by the law of God: surely we are called upon, not only to refuse compliance with such temptations as are enforced by our affections; but plainly to protest against such dangerous tempters, sharply to reprove them, and, if we cannot reclaim them, to renounce their friendship. Neither may we render any superior regard to the example of numbers, who establish *fashions* of ungodliness, and put piety out of countenance, as a singularity, a preciseness, an unnecessary scrupulosity. Still we must cleave to the Lord, and shew our love to him, by walking after him and not after the world; and by keeping his commandments, and attending on his worship, how much soever others desert or despise them, and revile us for our adherence to them.—The fear, love, and worship of God form the true interest of communities, as well as of individuals; and the progress of ungodliness precedes the approach of public calamities, both in the nature of things, and in the just judgment of God. The magistrate therefore, in good policy, as well as in duty, is bound to employ his authority to repress wickedness and promote religion; which may be done by various means, without wielding the persecutor's sword, or violating the rights of private judgment and liberty of conscience; especially by countenancing and encouraging the faithful preaching of God's word. But the end of all human punishments, yea of all the threatenings and judgments of God, is this; "that men should hear and fear," repent, and forsake their sins, "that the fierce wrath of God" may be averted, whether from individuals, or from nations. — However enormous any crime may be, and however necessary the punishment of it, none must be proceeded against, but upon diligent investigation, and full proof: and every one concerned in the prosecution of criminals should be careful to make it evident, that he is influenced, not by selfish motives, but by a regard to public justice. Such as connive at and conceal those enormous crimes, that ought to be punished by the magistrate, become partakers of the guilt: and the obstinate in wickedness are near to destruction; we must therefore separate from them, if we would escape their doom. Nor should we forget that we have no less reason, but indeed greater, to fear the wrath of this holy Lord God, under the Christian dispensation; because those spiritual judgments, which are now inflicted are infinitely more terrible, than the most solemn execution of criminals by the sword of justice: and the more entirely wicked people escape punishment in this world, the greater will be their misery in the world to come.—Let us then fear the *spiritual idolatry* of covetousness, and the love of worldly pleasure; and be careful not to countenance it in our families, by our example, or by the education of our children: and may the Lord write his law and truth in our hearts, there set up his throne and shed abroad his love, and thence expel all usurpers and rivals, that we may be his alone; as a full proof that our sins are forgiven, and as a gracious preparation for future chearful obedience.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. *Ye are the children,* &c.] (Notes, &c. *Gen.* vi. 2. *Lev.* xix. 27, 28. xxi. 5.)

15 And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,

16 The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan,

17 And the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the cormorant,

18 And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

19 And every creeping thing that flieth *is* unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten.

20 *But of* all clean fowls ye may eat.

21 Ye shall not eat *of* any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that *is* in thy gates, that he may eat it: or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; *or* if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

25 Then shalt thou turn *it* into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose.

26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household.

27 And the Levite that *is* within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay *it* up within thy gates.

29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

CHAP.

V. 21. *Thou shalt give it*, &c] This allowance evinces, that the law restricting diet was entirely ceremonial, though it conveyed moral instruction, and answered at that time valuable religious purposes: for, had the violation of it been sinful in its own nature, it would have been sinful in the heathens as well as in the Israelites, and they must no more have been accessory to the commission of sin by others, than have committed it themselves. (Notes, &c. *Lev.* xi.)

V. 22—29.] These verses contain a requisition of a second tithe from the produce of the land, which, with that appropriated for the maintenance of the Levites, amounted to a fifth part of it. Two years together the Israelites were commanded to bring the second tithe to Jerusalem, either in kind or in money, and to feast upon it religiously before the Lord, that they might be drawn to spend the more time at the Temple, in the society of the priests, the ordinances of God, and the company of his people. The third year they were required to spend this tithe in hospitably entertaining and relieving the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; that is, in every kind of charity. This whole appointment was evidently intended to counteract the covetousness, distrust, and selfishness of the human heart; to promote friendliness, liberality, and chearfulness; to raise a perpetual fund for the use of the poor; and to teach the people that they would never so comfortably enjoy their worldly portion, as when they shared it with their necessitous brethren. They were taught to convert the common blessings of providence into a sacred ordinance, by accompanying their most free but temperate use of them, with the exercise of religion: and this was the way to learn to fear God always, and to obtain his blessing upon all the works of their hands.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those, whom God hath chosen to be his children, he will form to be an holy people, of a peculiarly heavenly disposition, and zealous of good works, (*Tit.* ii. 14.) As their character and privileges are so distinguished from those of other people, they must be careful to maintain that distinction in its utmost extent; to shew to the world an evident example of holy moderation in all their affections, and to avoid every thing which may disgrace their profession in the sight of all who watch for their halting. Having a Father in heaven, who ever liveth to supply all their wants, and to repair every breach, they need not mourn the loss of earthly friends disconsolately as others do.—Our heavenly Father prohibits us nothing, but in a wise and kind regard to our welfare; nothing, but what is debasing or hurtful, or which leads us into temptation. The language of his prohibitions, rightly interpreted, is, "Do thyself no harm;" 'do not wound thyself; do not

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CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1*st. A* judicial *law for the releaſe of debts every ſabbatical year, with a* moral *injunction of lending liberally notwithſtanding,* 1—11. 2*d. The laws of releaſing ſlaves repeated and enforced, with additions,* 12—18. 3*d. The firſtlings commanded to be devoted to the Lord,* 19—23.

AT the end of *every* ſeven years thou ſhalt make a releaſe.

2 And this *is* the manner of the releaſe: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour ſhall releaſe *it*, he ſhall not exact *it* of his neighbour, or of his brother; becauſe it is called the LORD's releaſe.

3 Of a foreigner thou mayeſt exact *it again:* but *that* which is thine with thy brother, thine hand ſhall releaſe;

4 Save when there ſhall be no poor among you; for the LORD ſhall greatly bleſs thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to poſſeſs it:

5 Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to obſerve to do all theſe commandments which I command thee this day.

6 For the LORD thy God bleſſeth thee, as he promiſed thee; and thou ſhalt lend unto many nations, but thou ſhalt not borrow; and thou ſhalt reign over many nations, but they ſhall not reign over thee.

7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not harden thine heart, nor ſhut thine hand from thy poor brother;

8 But thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto him, and ſhalt ſurely lend him ſufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.

9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, ſaying, The ſeventh year, the year of releaſe, is at hand; and thine eye be evil againſt thy poor brother, and thou giveſt him nought, and he cry unto the LORD againſt thee, and it be ſin unto thee.

10 Thou

'ruin thy health, thy reputation, thy domeſtic comfort, 'thy peace of mind; eſpecially do not murder thy ſoul; 'do not be the vile ſlave of thy appetites and paſſions, do 'not render all around thee miſerable, and thyſelf the moſt 'wretched of all; but aſpire at that which is noble, excel-'lent, permanent, and uſeful.' Conſidering theſe prohibitions, in connection with the manifold indulgences he allows us, we muſt acknowledge that we ſhould all be happy, if we conſulted our own and each other's welfare, as much as the law of God doth. Making that our *rule of enjoyment*, we ſhould uſe providential bleſſings in ſubſerviency to religious edification, to our own inward peace and ſatisfaction, to the promotion of brotherly-love, to our mutual uſefulneſs, and to the production of fruit which will at length abound to our own account. That "Wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs," is a truth, of which every man will have experimental proof, in proportion to his devotedneſs to God. May we then chooſe and purſue this happineſs, and compaſſionate and pray for thoſe deluded millions who ſeek for pleaſure in ſin, which is the only cauſe of all the miſery in the univerſe: and let us learn to value every earthly advantage as enabling us to glorify God, by diſſeminating the knowledge of his truth, and by communicating to the relief of our diſtreſſed brethren and fellow-creatures.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2. *He ſhall not* exact *it*, &c.] The debtor was bound in conſcience to pay the debt, if he were able, at that or any future time: but the creditor was not allowed to ſue for it, nor the magiſtrate to enforce the payment of it; at leaſt if it appeared that the debtor could not with conveniency part with the money. Some ſuch limitation the word *exact* ſeems to admit of; and the law was evidently intended for the relief of the indigent, not for the ſecurity of the fraudulent. (4.)

V. 3. *Of a foreigner*, &c.] Though the Iſraelites were not allowed to oppreſs foreigners, or to do injuſtice to them, yet in *thoſe laws of love* a difference was made betwixt ſtrangers and their brethren. We muſt do exact juſtice to all; but in ſhewing kindneſs we muſt eſpecially regard the houſehold of faith.

V. 4—6.] Had the Iſraelites fully performed the terms of their national covenant, their great proſperity would have entirely baniſhed poverty from among them. But the Lord foreſaw that they would not be thus obedient, and foretold, that "the poor ſhould never ceaſe from "among them," but always remain as a trial of their diſpoſition to do good for his ſake, (11.) The words, "Save when there ſhall be no more poor among you," may alſo imply that they ought ſo liberally to relieve every poor brother, that all being comfortably provided for, no poverty might be viſible among them.

V. 9. *That*, &c.] The righteous demands of God's law rouſe the dormant enmity of man's wicked heart, and prove an occaſion of increaſing his guilt, (*Rom.* vii. 8—13;) for the ſame law condemns every riſing thought of ſin. The Iſraelites were therefore exhorted to beware leſt this ſhould be the caſe with them; leſt this equitable ſtatute ſhould occaſion their covetouſneſs to work; and leſt they ſhould evade it, by refuſing to lend the poor in their diſtreſs, or by only lending them in a niggardly and grudging manner, becauſe of this law. The caution forms a divinely inſpired comment on the law of "loving our neighbour as ourſelves," which is ſtill in full force, (*Matth.* vi. 12. xviii. 35. *Luke* vi. 35;) though the judicial

10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

12 *And* if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:

14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: *of that* wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day.

16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee, (because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;)

17 Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever: and also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise.

18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant *to thee*, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

19 All the firstling males that come of thy herd, and of thy flock, thou shalt sanctify unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep.

20 Thou shalt eat *it* before the LORD thy God, year by year, in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household.

21 And if there be *any* blemish therein, *as if it be* lame, or blind, *or have* any ill blemish, thou shall not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean *person shall eat it* alike, as the roe-buck, and as the hart.

23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

CHAP.

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judicial law, upon which it was grafted, be no longer the magistrate's rule in administering justice, (Notes, &c. *Ex.* xxiii. 10, 11. *Lev.* xxv. 2—7.)

V. 14, 15.] This addition to the law before commented on, (Note, *Exod.* xxi. 6.) is likewise a divine interpretation of the law of love, which was enforced upon the Israelites by the consideration of their redemption from the Egyptian bondage, the manner in which the Egyptians were constrained to pay them their wages, and the prosperity to which the Lord had advanced them. And the spirit of the precept is obligatory upon the redeemed of the Lord, on higher obligations and from more powerful motives.

V. 17. *And also*, &c.] Hence it appears that female servants were purchased for their labour, without any purpose of espousing them, and that they were under the same law with the men-servants, (*Exod.* xxi. 7—11.)

V. 18. *In serving thee*, &c.] It seems that it was not customary for hired servants to serve longer than three years at one time, lest their condition should too much resemble that of those, who sold themselves through poverty, or were sold for their debts or crimes.

V. 19—23.] The firstling being a male was sacrificed, and those parts which were not burnt upon the altar were eaten by the priests. But if it was female, it was offered as a peace-offering, and feasted upon by the offerer and his friends; except it were blemished, and then it was slain when young, and eaten as ordinary food, but without the blood.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are here called upon to remember, that we are debtors to divine justice, have got nothing to pay, (*Luke* vii. 41, 42;) and are liable to be sent to the prison of hell on that account: that we are slaves, and poor, and perishing; but the Lord Jesus Christ, by becoming poor, and shedding his blood, hath made an infinite provision for the payment of our debts, the ransom of our souls, and the full and everlasting supply of all our wants. This provision is revealed and proposed in the gospel, and we are invited to partake of all these blessings, freely, without money, and without price. When this gospel is clearly preached, then and there is proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of release of our debts, of the deliverance of our souls, and of obtaining rest in him. To every true believer the Lord frankly forgives the whole debt, and he becomes a partaker of Christ, of his freedom, and of all his unsearchable riches. These favoured persons he requires, with the mild accents of love, to perform those

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. A repetition of the laws concerning the three great annual feasts, 1—17. 2d. Orders for the appointment, and concerning the duties, of inferior magistrates, 18—20. 3d. Groves near God's altar, and images, prohibited, 21, 22.

OBSERVE the month of Abib and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.

3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; (for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste:) that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.

5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee:

6 But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

7 And thou shalt roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.

8 Six

these very duties which the law required under awful penalties. Thus we are called to prove that our faith is not that dead faith, which as a worthless putrifying carcase must be carried out of the church of God; but that it works by love, and that our love is proved sincere by the fruits of kindness to our brethren. To favour this trial of our faith, the poor continue among us, as appointed to be the Lord's representatives and receivers: and to relieve their wants, and remit their debts, according to the measure of our ability, is one grand expression and test of our love to the Saviour. (*Notes, Matt.* xxv. 31—46. *John*, xii. 8.) Upon the most powerful motives, and with the most encouraging promises, the professed disciples of Christ are exhorted to abound in this grace also. In proportion as faith and love prevail, they will triumph over the selfishness of the heart, and over the ingratitude of the world; and exclude those numerous excuses, which result from unbelief, distrust, and covetousness.—The aim of every Christian should be daily "to do good to all men, especially to them that are "of the household of faith:" and to open his hand liberally in giving or in lending, according to his ability, and according to the necessity of his brethren, that distressing poverty may have no place amongst the followers of Christ; especially searching out such as are most modest, humble, and backward to complain, or to obtrude upon the notice of others.—Though this be no more than a proper acknowledgment of obligations already received, yet it shall be considered as lending to the Lord, and shall abundantly be recompensed.—Let all then beware of covetousness, and watch and pray against the workings of an envious, grudging, selfish heart. We need never fear being losers, when the Lord stands security for the debt; nor carrying matters to excess, whilst we fall so short of his measure of love to us; (1 *John*, iii. 16—18;) and that which the world calls prudence will be found the greatest folly. In the exercise of this loving kindness, those ought especially to be provided for, who have been useful to us and spent their strength in our service; nor should we think it hard

but rather rejoice, in contributing, though at some expence, to the comfort of those who have so good a claim to our generosity: and Christians should be ambitious of rendering all, who live in their families, or are connected with them, so well satisfied, that they may love them and their houses, and count it their privilege to abide there. Such a Master is our God: all, who make trial of his service, will account it perfect freedom, and consider it their happiness to join themselves to him, to serve him with all they have and are, and to dwell in his house as his willing servants for ever and ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1. *By night.*] Though the Israelites did not set off to go out of Egypt till the morning; yet, whilst they were eating the passover, and holding themselves in readiness during the night, the first-born of Egypt were destroyed, which made way for their release: and afterwards by night they passed the Red Sea, by which their deliverance was completed.—Moses repeated these laws, as with his dying lips, to this new generation, just upon their entrance into Canaan, to leave the deeper impression upon their minds. (*Notes, Exod.* xii. *Lev.* xxiii. *Numb.* xxviii. 16—30.)

V. 4—6.] The use of unleavened bread was general through the whole land, by which they, who were confined at home, testified their concurrence with those who *ate the passover* at the tabernacle: but that was appointed to be slain, and eaten only in the place where the tabernacle was situated. Thither the males were required to come both at the passover and the two other great feasts, unless unavoidably prevented: and the women, though not commended, frequently attended them. (1 *Sam.* i. 7. *Luke*, ii. 41. *Note Deut.* xii. 5.)

V. 7. *In the morning*, &c.] In case of urgent necessity, the Israelites might return home the next morning after eating the passover: or this may mean *the morning after the conclusion of the feast*; which consisted of the day on

8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *shall be a* solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work *therein*.

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest *to put* the sickle to the corn.

10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a free-will-offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

13 Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:

14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* within thy gates.

15 Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose; because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands; therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

17 Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee.

22 Neither shalt thou set thee up *any* image; which the LORD thy God hateth.

CHAP.

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which the passover was eaten, six intervening days, and the last concluding day of a solemn assembly, being eight in the whole; from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day of the month, both inclusive.

V. 9. *Put the sickle*, &c.] That is, to reap the sheaf of first-fruits, which was presented on the first day of unleavened bread.

V. 18. *Judges and Officers*, &c.] These were inferior magistrates residing in the different parts of the country, to decide causes, with appeal in difficult and important cases to the superior courts. (*Notes, &c. Exod.* xxiii. 6—8. 2 *Chron.* xix. 5—11.)

V. 21. *A grove*, &c.] Such groves, having been generally adopted in the worship of idols, and made the scenes of the vilest abominations, were prohibited in the worship of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The frequent repetition of the same laws forms an humiliating reproach of man's unteachableness in spiritual things; for God doeth nothing in vain.—From this manner

ple of Moses, ministers and parents may learn to renew their instructions and admonitions with their latest breath, that the survivors may have them associated with every remembrance of them.—A believer should not forget for one day, his original low state of guilt and misery, his gracious deliverance, and the price which it cost the Redeemer; that gratitude and joy in the Lord may, during the residue of his life, be mingled with godly sorrow, mortification of sin, and humble patience under the tribulations, which lie in the way to the kingdom of heaven.—Every one of our services must be performed in communion with the church of Christ; and independence on him, our Temple, Altar, Sacrifice, and Passover; and with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We should indeed be thankful that our attendance on God's ordinances does not require such long and expensive journeys, as that of Israel did: but if our hearts be right with God, we shall so delight in his service, that the labour required in it will be our pleasure, or we shall be ashamed that it is not. And the expence incurred in making the heart of the poor and destitute rejoice with us, according to this

Lord's

CHAP. XVII.

Contains laws, 1st. That the sacrifices should be of unblemished animals, 1. 2d. For the punishment of idolaters, 2—7. 3d, For appeal to the priests and magistrates residing near the sanctuary, and the punishment of such as refused to submit to their decision, 8—13. 4th. Concerning the appointment and duty of kings, 14—20.

THOU shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God *any* bullock or sheep wherein is blemish, *or* any ill-favouredness: for that *is* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

2 If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

3 And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;

4 And it be told thee, and thou hast heard *of it*, and enquired diligently, and, behold, *it be* true, *and* the thing certain, *that* such abomination is wrought in Israel:

5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, (which have committed that wicked thing,) unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die.

6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people: so thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy, within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose;

9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:

10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee;

11 According to the sentence of the law which

Lord's blessing upon us, will be our own heartfelt satisfaction.—Let us also note that magistracy is the appointment of God; as such we are bound to submit to it, being thankful for its advantages, and patient under its inconveniences, and praying for those placed over us. But magistrates likewise should consider their accountableness to God for the use of their authority; and study to know and do their duty in uprightness, disinterestedness, and impartiality; that they may both be public blessings to others, and may inherit everlasting life themselves, as the true disciples of him, who "loveth righteousness, and "hateth iniquity."—Indeed none of us should fear any thing so much as doing that "which the Lord our God "hateth."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 2—7.] The expression *within thy gates*, denoted all those who resided in the cities, and all that went in and came out at the gates of any of them: so that it included all the inhabitants of the whole land.—This law enjoined that those who committed idolatry should be stoned, as well as those who seduced others to commit it: for that crime especially "trangressed the co-"venant," and would become a national forfeiture, if not thus punished.—Had men been *commanded* to worship creatures, however exalted, it might have been complained of as a degradation: much more if they had been required to worship beasts, inanimate figures, and flocks and bottles.

But God had not commanded; nay he had expressly forbidden such practices; and they were entirely man's own foolish inventions, and Satan's abominable suggestions.—This law was the magistrate's rule in administering justice to individuals: as that, which was before considered, (*Notes*, &c. xiii.) regulated informations of idolatry, and the punishment of cities, which were guilty of that crime. In both cases the witnesses were required to take the lead in the execution of the criminal, that they might, by that consideration, be rendered more cautious in their testimony; for though the false witness was the actual murderer of the person put to death unjustly, yet perhaps he would not be so much shocked by it, when another was the executioner of the sentence, as when he himself was required to perform that painful office.

V. 8—13.] This law is addressed to the inferior magistrates before mentioned. (xvi. 18.) In many cases of life and death, or of property, or concerning the law of retaliation, they might find perplexing difficulties. Such cases were therefore to be referred to the decision of the superior tribunals, which were held at the place where the tabernacle was fixed.—The priests and Levites, having the most leisure, and being especially appointed to the study of the law, which was not only the *rule of conscience*, but *the law of the land*, by their learning would be best qualified to act as judges; and probably the Sanhedrim and other superior courts of justice were composed of them *chiefly*, though not without some persons of the other tribes. The

judge

which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, *to* the right hand nor *to* the left.

12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me:

15 Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites:

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them:

20 That

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judge here mentioned may either mean the High Priest, or some other supreme magistrate, whom God from time to time should raise up among them. To these persons the appeal was directed to be made; and with all their advantages, they were not likely to give a false sentence, whilst they continued free from gross apostacy in religion and corruption in morals. As, however, this law related not to *matters of faith and conscience*, but merely *to the administration of justice in the land*; it would be better that an individual should sometimes be aggrieved, than that the advantages of magistracy should be abridged: therefore he, who presumptuously refused to submit, was ordered to be put to death as a rebel against the government. In every state there must be some final award, from which there lies no appeal, which must be submitted to even though in some cases it should be unjust; but this gives no countenance to the monstrous claim, which some have made of being *absolute interpreters of doctrines and precepts, in matters of conscience*, to which all must submit, however evidently their decisions contradict the word of God. In this argument it is enough to say, "we must "obey" and believe "God, rather than man;" as Peter replied to the successors of those very persons, to whom the authority in question was given, and on whom it had at that time devolved.

V. 14. *A king, &c.*] The appointment of a king is not here *commanded*, nor so much as *counselled*: nay it is implied that such a change in their government would originate from a desire of being *like the nations*, to whom God would have *his people unlike*: and we know that they sinned when they asked a king. (1 *Sam.* xii. 19.) Yet God foresaw that this event would actually take place, and he previously gave these rules respecting it.—We should argue therefore very inconclusively, if we should infer the lawfulness of slavery, polygamy, or divorces, from those judicial laws, which *suppose their existence, and establish re-*

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gulations concerning them: for all such questions must be determined by the plain precepts or general tenor of scripture, and not by these *judicial* regulations.

V. 15. *A stranger, &c.*] The Israelites were forbidden to set a stranger over them, not only lest he should oppress them, but lest he should lead them into idolatry. This refers to a king whom they should choose and appoint for themselves; not to a power which in the providence of God might be placed over them without their own concurrence: but the interpreters of the law, in the days of Christ, deduced from this clause the unlawfulness of *submitting* to a foreign yoke, and incited the people to continual rebellions, which at length terminated in their ruin.

V. 16. *Multiply horses, &c.*] The multiplying of horses for chariots of war and cavalry, or for luxury, would increase the pomp and splendour of the monarch, and form a ground of confidence distinct from, and inconsistent with a proper confidence in God, and with considering him as the glory of Israel. As Egypt abounded in horses, it would induce such a trade with that kingdom, from which they ought to be totally separated, as might end in their being again brought into bondage to that nation. (1 *Kings*, x. 26. 28, 29.)

V. 18. *A copy of this law, &c.*] Some interpret this command of the book of Deuteronomy alone: but it is most probable that the whole law was intended: and if Moses with his immense engagements found time for *compiling* and *writing* the whole; it could not be an intolerable task imposed upon any future prince, if he were required to *transcribe* it. This would have a great effect in rendering him well acquainted with the law; for writing not only assists the memory, but causes us to suppose every single word of what we transcribe. It is however probable, that this law was very seldom observed by the kings of Judah and Israel.

PRAC-

20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Rules concerning the perquisites of the priests and Levites, 1—8. 2d. Idolatry and witchcraft prohibited, 9—14. 3d. A prophet like unto Moses promised, 15—19. 4th. The detection and punishment of false prophets, 20—22.

THE priests the Levites, *and* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.

2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD *is* their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether *it be* ox or sheep: and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.

4 The first-fruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

5 For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

6 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are continually called upon to remember the perfect, pure, and spotless sacrifice of Christ; and reminded, to serve God with the best of our abilities, time, and possessions; otherwise our supposed obedience will be an abomination. To him all worship and love belong, and all idolatry and irreligion of every kind are offensive in the greatest degree, and will assuredly be punished, in this world or in the next, as well as those crimes which disturb the peace of society; nay with greater severity, as being of deeper malignity.—We are also repeatedly cautioned against rashness in bearing testimony, or in punishing supposed criminals, that the innocent may not be involved in the same doom with the guilty.—The ministers of religion and civil magistrates should, in their several places, give diligence to obtain exact and extensive knowledge, as well as to act with integrity and impartiality, that they may not mislead or injure those who place confidence in their decisions. In both cases however, there lies an appeal to the infallible Teacher and Judge of the world, who, here or hereafter, will set all right, and do justice to those that trust in him.—The presumptuous offender, who refused to submit to the award of human justice, with all it's imperfections, was condemned to die: of what punishment then will the obstinate rebel against the righteous Governor of the universe be adjudged worthy? and with what vengeance will he, who despises or abuses the grace of the gospel be recompensed?—The Lord sees the hearts of his own people too much disposed to be like the world around them; and for their chastisement frequently permits them to obtain the objects of their foolish and sinful desires; still regulating the whole ultimately for their good. But the higher any person is exalted, the more strongly will he be tempted to pride, covetousness, luxury, and lust, those fatal enemies to true godliness, which tend exceedingly to rivet the chains of hell upon the soul. Against these things princes have especially need to watch and to be cautioned lest the pernicious influence of their example and authority should become subsidiary to infidelity, which leads up to all the practices and profanity. But alas! who does not

ness, disinterestedness, and zeal sufficient to venture the loss of their favour, and the consequences of their displeasure, by reminding them of such salutary but distasteful truths? *Almost* all men will rather occupy the more pleasing and profitable place of flatterers; and the remaining few will either observe a timid silence, or soon be driven from the verge of courts! (*Amos.* vii. 12, 13.) *Kings therefore* have therefore the more need to be employed in the daily study of the Scriptures, that they may become well acquainted with the truth and will of God: that at the fountain-head they may learn the true wisdom which begins in the fear of God, in habitual regard to his authority, and to that great day of account, in which there will be no respect of persons; and that from these principles may result a conscientious worship of him and universal obedience to him. And seeing the welfare of kingdoms is so intimately connected with the character of their princes, we ought all to pray to the Lord to place such kings over us, or to give such wisdom and grace to those who are placed over us, and to increase unto them every good and perfect gift; and to be especially thankful when such prayers are answered, and the blessing of good governors is bestowed upon us. But alas! how much of God's word is overlooked by his professed people! One is tempted to think that this chapter was expunged from Solomon's Bible, and those of other Jewish kings. And might not an impartial and well-informed person suppose the same respecting some of our Bibles, with reference to those chapters which immediately instruct us in our duties? We have therefore all need more carefully and exactly to study the Scriptures, to examine ourselves, to watch our hearts, to avoid temptations to pride and the love of this present world; and to pray for faith and grace, by which we may be enabled to observe all the commandments of God, for "in keeping of them there is great reward."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 3. *The shoulder, &c.*] The two cheeks are supposed to have been at this time reckoned out of the peace-offerings, in addition to what had before been al-

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourneth, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose;

7 Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites *do*, which stand there before the LORD.

8 They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

10 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

14 For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so *to do*.

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken.

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

20 But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak

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lotted the priests and Levites. They are not, however, mentioned in any of the preceding laws. (*Lev.* vii. 31—34.)

V. 6—8.] It seems that the Levites officiated by turns, or according to some rule, from their first establishment in Canaan: but if any one, out of his course, from cordial love of the ordinances and courts of the Lord, preferred officiating as a servant to the priests at the sanctuary, to living at home with his family, he was to be encouraged by an addition to his maintenance, above that share of the tithes which was regularly allotted him.

V. 9—12.] The several words here employed are supposed to include every species of that superstition or idolatry, which consists in seeking such information or help from other invisible beings, real or supposed, as cannot be obtained from God; from whom nothing can be expected, but either in the use of means which have a *natural* efficacy, or in ordinances of his own appointment; or in having other rules of conduct, than his precepts and the dictates of human prudence. The *translation* itself, without criticizing the original terms, indisputably proves that the venerable *translators* supposed all calculations of lucky or unlucky days, for undertaking any enterprize; all attempts to *charm* away agues or other diseases by unmeaning observances; all amulets or spells by way of preservative, as well as every kind of fortune-telling, to be here prohibited. Not only would such practices be abominable in the Israelites; but they were to consider even the Canaanites, as to form a chief cause of their dreadful extirpation; being all of them either human imposture, or diabolical delusion; and either way conducive to the gratification of that ambitious spirit, who appears in every form to be the god and prince of this world.

V. 13. *Thou perfect, &c.*] That is, *by simply depending on him, and devoted to him.*

V. 15—19.] Whether a succession of true prophets, to assist the priests and Levites when they did their duty, or to correct their errors and supply their omissions when they neglected it, be here implied, as some expositors think; or whether that opinion be groundless, we are sure that this promise especially related to Jesus Christ. (*Acts* iii. 22. vii. 37. *Heb.* iii. 1.) As the great Antitype of Moses, he resembled him in more particulars and with greater exactness than he did any of the prophets or typical persons mentioned in the Old Testament.—Born in the reign of a persecuting tyrant, his life was sought in his infancy, and wonderfully preserved whilst many other infants were destroyed.—At the entrance of his career he rejected the proposal of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, as Moses did that prospect of honour and advancement in Egypt, and preferred a suffering, poor, and despised (*Luke* xi. 29—32.) He was rejected by his own countrymen, those more particularly for whom he was sent, the Jews; voluntarily impoverished himself, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and working miracles, with all the desire of our mind."

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speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. The law concerning the cities of refuge enforced and explained, 1—13. 2d. Laws against removing land-marks, and for the punishment of false witnesses, 14—21.

WHEN the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses;

2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.

4 And this *is* the case of the slayer which shall flee thither, that he may live: whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;

5 As

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whole Israel of God. His character was remarkable for meekness and patience, and every excellency, in measure far exceeding that of the deliverer of Israel. For our benefit he united in one person the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; all which concentre in his being the Mediator of the covenant, and the establisher of a new dispensation. He feeds his people with the true manna, and gives them the true living water to drink; and many of his miracles resembled, but far surpassed, those of Moses.—He was opposed by his brethren, as well as by the people, and was especially objected to for espousing the Gentiles as his church. All the prophets and apostles speak as his delegates; the whole scripture is his word; and all ministers obtain their authority, derive their commission, and receive their instructions, from him. His knowledge of and intimacy with the Father are unexampled, and appropriate: his life was spent, closed, and laid down for the people's benefit, and for their sins; and his resurrection precluded the exact knowledge of his sepulchre, and should have prevented the superstitious veneration for it. Finally, as he alone could approach God upon mount Sinai, according to the law of works; so it will most woefully be required of those, who reject his salvation, who will not hearken to his instructions, or who refuse to have him to reign over them.

V. 22. *Nor, &c.*] The failure of the prediction evinced the false prophet, except when repentance averted threatened judgments: the accomplishment of them approved the true prophet, unless attended with a temptation to idolatry. (*Note*, Jer. xxviii. 1—3.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ministers of the gospel should, by a decent provision, be preserved from the grating temptation to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may be more at leisure for their proper work; and thus be absolutely free from secular cares and other avocations. Christ, engage them in any secular employment, or worldly projects, even with a view to their maintenance, much less for gain. It is a scandal to [illegible] with all the desire of our mind.

Before Christ 1451.

It is well when this carries us forward in leaving all for the sake of Christ and the gospel. He will not suffer such disciples to lose their reward; and it is *his* appointment, that those ministers, who *labour* most in the word and doctrine, should be best provided for. Yet they, who will do no more in God's service, than man will pay them for, are not worthy of being called the ministers of Christ at all. (*Mat.* x. 10.)—Christians are required simply to trust and submit to the Lord; and cannot want any information, security, or assistance, which he will not afford them: and the Lord their God not only doth not suffer them to do such things as he abhorred in Canaanites, and will much more abhor in them; but he calls upon them to bear testimony against every evil work. (*Eph.* v. 11—13.)

We have a Prophet like unto Moses, but far superior, to shew us the truth and will of God, the way of acceptance, and of holiness: nay to "shew us the Father" for, "he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father." (*John*, xiv. 9, 10.) "He dwelleth in the Father, and the Father in him." Yet is he raised up from among his brethren, and dwells likewise in human nature. That view of God which he gives will not terrify or overwhelm, but encourage, us: he speaks with fraternal affection and divine authority conjoined. Woe then be to those who refuse to hearken to his voice, to accept of his salvation, or yield obedience to his sway. But happy they, who trust in and obey him: he will lead them into the paths of safety and of peace; he will teach them to distinguish his ministers from those of satan, however disguised; and he will preserve them from every delusion, until he bring them to the land of perfect light, purity, and felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 2—7.] (*Notes, Exod. xxi.*) Three cities of refuge had already been allotted on the east of Jordan, (iv. 41—43.) and the other three were to be [illegible] possession of the country: the [illegible] boundaries should in after ages be enlarged, three more were to be added. In pitching upon them they were

5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities and live:

6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.

8 And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers;

9 (If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways;) then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:

10 That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and *so* blood be upon thee.

11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities;

12 Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

13 Thine eye shall not pity him; but thou shalt put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

16 If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him *that which is* wrong;

17 Then both the men, between whom the controversy *is*, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days.

18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, *if* the witness *be* a false witness, *and* hath testified falsely against his brother;

19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put away the evil from among you.

20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear

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commanded to be careful in proportioning the distances, "that the way might not be too long" to some one of them, from any part of the land; and the way was also to be prepared: "that innocent blood should not be shed in their land," by the avenger of blood overtaking the unfortunate man-slayer, before he arrived at a place of refuge. The promise of still further enlarging the possessions of Israel was conditional, and by their disobedience they so far forfeited it, that these additional cities of refuge were never appointed. The Jews flatter themselves with the expectation of a future accomplishment of these promises, when this addition will be made.

V. 14. *Land-mark*, &c.] As land-marks constituted the customary method of distinguishing landed property in those days, removing them would be a crime among the Israelites, similar to forging, altering, destroying, or concealing the title-deeds of estates at this day, and would occasion injustice, dispute, and law-suits.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In conveying information, familiar examples and illustrations, though taken from the most ordinary occasions or scenes of life, are of very great use to give determinate ideas of the thing intended to be inculcated: and in laws especially precision should be chiefly studied, that the distinction betwixt the innocent and the guilty, and betwixt a man's crime and his calamity, may be as plainly specified as it is possible. For whether the criminal escape unpunished, or the innocent suffer, injustice is committed; and in case of bloodshed, guilt is brought upon the land where it takes place. On such occasions compassion for the offender may be sinful, and even become cruelty to others; it must therefore be moderated, or counteracted by the love of justice, general benevolence, and the fear of God. But to avoid the horrid crime of murder, we must watch and pray against the first emotions of hatred and anger: and to be preserved from injustice, we must beware of covetousness, which is wonderfully ingenious in devising such methods of defrauding, as may escape detection, censure, or human punishment. Also, what encouragement is it to the timid human spirit, that God himself forbids the oppression of any one, may be taken in a manner of argument similar to that in which he addresses all men in the gospel, absolutely and in all cases to be trusted; which is not only a caution

fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

21 And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

CHAPTER XX.

Contains rules for the encouragement and selection of soldiers, 1—8. 2d. For the conduct of the Israelites towards those nations with whom they waged war, 10—20.

WHEN thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, *and a people* more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

4 For the LORD your God *is* he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man *is there* that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man *is he* that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not *yet* eaten of it? let him *also* go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.

7 And what man *is there* that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.

8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man *is there that is* fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.

9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight

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a caution to judges and juries, but matter of watchfulness and humiliation to us all.—Few crimes are more atrocious in their nature, pernicious in their effects, or affronting to God, than bearing false witness in matters of great importance; and with us especially, where it is *always* connected with perjury. It is greatly to be wished, that it was more commonly and severely punished by man, according to this more excellent and equitable law: but it will assuredly meet with its due punishment from a righteous God. However, let all Christians not only be cautious in *bearing public testimony*, but be careful not to propagate *private slanders*; (Prov. xxvi. 18, 19,) and let him, whose conscience accuses them of these or other crimes, without delay flee for refuge to the hope set before us in Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1—4. In the wars in which Moses engaged according to the will of God, they might expect his especial assistance. This should have been their confidence; of this his former wonderful works were their assurance; and of these things the priests were to remind them for their encouragement. In all these respects they were types of the Christian with respect to his spiritual enemies.

V. 5—9. The Israelites were accustomed to build houses when settling, or planting a vineyard, or marrying a wife, soon after their return from Egypt. Moses, as a wise general, ordered that all these should be left to their friends, according to the law of divorce, by which their wives were put under the immediate protection of God, and the blessings of his grace and peace were supplicated, that they might prove houses of harmony and of true godliness. (Psalm cxxvii. Title.) These regulations probably were not intended to take place in the first wars of Canaan, in which all who were able were required to enlist; but in those in which they might afterwards engage; and they not only condescended to the allowable affections of human nature, and were calculated to compose armies constituted of persons whose minds were free from discomposure and delirium; but they also united the true character and frame of mind which befits the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Some suppose that the *fearful* were such as were intimidated by a guilty conscience; and thence infer, that atrocious sinners are an encouragement and a curse to armies, as well as churches (Num. 9:); but this is very different from the pretences of modern tactics, and the practice of modern gentlemen and commanders. However, until the cowards were dismissed, the subordinate officers were not appointed; for they, who preside either in armies or in churches, should be effectually valiant for the cause in which they are engaged.

V. 10—18. We must suppose in the cases here intended that the Canaanites had some warrantable cause of leaving their habitations, and the Israelites had been injured, or insulted by some foreign nation, before they proceeded in the manner here prescribed; for the Lord purposed by these means to enlarge their dominions, whilst they

fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, *that* all the people *that is* found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even* all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities *which are* very far off from thee, which *are* not of the cities of these nations.

16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down, (for the tree of the field *is* man's *life*,) to employ *them* in the siege:

20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they *be* not trees for meat thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

CHAP.

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wise reasons why they were not only *allowed*, but, as it seems, *commanded*, to put to death all the males who were capable of resistence. The lives and property of all men are the Lord's, forfeited to his justice, to be disposed of at his pleasure and for his glory. These regulations, however, are not by any means the rule of our conduct: but the general *law of love*, which prohibits unnecessary bloodshed and plunder, in war as well as in peace. One reason of these appointments might be, to shadow forth the fatal consequences of persisting in rebellion and enmity against God, in contempt of the gospel-proposal of peace and reconciliation.—Some are of opinion that no terms of peace might, in any case whatever, be offered or allowed to the devoted inhabitants of Canaan, because their measure of wickedness was filled up, and they would be a constant temptation to the Israelites: but we shall meet with some events in the course of this history, which will not easily comport with this absolute interpretation. Others therefore suppose the meaning to be, that in case the Canaanites rejected peace and servitude, this entire extirpation was to take place; whereas only the grown males were to be put to death, in other cities in similar circumstances; and the other inhabitants reduced to servitude.

V. 19, 20.] The original words rendered, "the tree of the field is man's life," have excessively puzzled the critics; and our translation gives us one *opinion* of their meaning, about as probable as any other. The intention evidently is, that the Israelites should not make unnecessary waste of things useful unto man's life, as the fruit-trees were; and therefore in their sieges should form their machines of timber-trees only.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

War is an appeal to the righteous Governor of the world, and should be undertaken and conducted upon such principles, and such only, as he approves. When the cause will warrant this awful appeal, the Lord himself may safely be trusted for the event, and confidence should be placed, not in chariots and horses, not in fleets and armies, not in experienced commanders and brave soldiers, but in the Lord of Hosts himself.—Though religion and its faithful ministers are generally slighted by those who "jeopardy their lives in the high places of the field;" yet in reality, no people so much want their instructions, counsels, and prayers, as they do, both *individually*, and with respect to the common cause which God himself will entirely decide. Nor is any valour *rational*, but that which springs from faith, a good conscience, a sense of duty, a confidence in God, and a hope of heaven: for he who neither fears those who kill the body, nor him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, is not valiant, but absolutely mad: whilst in the former case intrepidity is reason and wisdom, and rests on an immoveable basis.—In war itself, justice and the love of peace should dictate every measure; the voice of humanity should be heard distinctly even in the noise of the battle; and wanton cruelty or waste should never sully the soldiers reputation.—After all, the horrors of war must fill the feeling heart with anguish upon every recollection, and can only be considered as evidences of the depravity of man, the power of Satan, and the just vengeance of God who thus scourges a guilty world. May the happy time soon come when "swords shall be beaten into plough-shares,

CHAP. XXI.

Contains laws, 1st. For purging the land from the guilt of murder, when the murderer was concealed, 1—9. 2d. For regulating the marriage of an Israelite with a captive maid, 10—14. 3d. For regulating the inheritance of children, 15—17. 4th. For the punishment of the rebellious son, 18—21. 5th. For the interment of malefactors, 22, 23.

1 IF *one* be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to poſſeſs it, lying in the field, *and* it be not known who hath ſlain him;

2 Then thy elders and thy judges ſhall come forth, and they ſhall meaſure unto the cities which *are* round about him that is ſlain.

3 And it ſhall be, *that* the city *which is* next unto the ſlain man, even the elders of that city ſhall take an heifer which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke;

4 And the elders of that city ſhall bring down the heifer into a rough valley, which is neither eared nor ſown, and ſhall ſtrike off the heifer's neck there in the valley:

5 And the prieſts the ſons of Levi ſhall come near; (for them the LORD thy God hath choſen to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in the name of the LORD, and by their word ſhall every controverſy and every ſtroke be *tried*;)

6 And all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the ſlain *man*, ſhall waſh their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley:

7 And they ſhall anſwer and ſay, Our hands have not ſhed this blood, neither have our eyes ſeen *it*.

8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Iſrael, whom thou haſt redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Iſrael's charge. And the blood ſhall be forgiven them.

9 So ſhalt thou put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you, when thou ſhalt do *that which* is right in the ſight of the LORD.

10 When thou goeſt forth to war againſt thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou haſt taken them captive,

11 And

"ſhares, and men ſhall learn war no more!" But how dreadful is the caſe of thoſe who are engaged in unequal conteſt with their Maker, who refuſe his propoſals of peace, who will not ſubmit to be his ſervants, and render him the eaſy tribute of worſhip and praiſe! Inevitable ruin awaits them. May we be at peace with the Lord, and wage war with his enemies, our luſts and the powers of darkneſs, with undaunted courage and unrelenting ſeverity. Let neither the number or power of our enemies diſmay us; let not even our own weakneſs cauſe us to tremble or to faint: the Lord himſelf will fight for us, and ſave us; and all his wonders wrought for his church enſure our victory. In this war none ſhould pretend to engage, whoſe hearts are attached inordinately to worldly objects, or who are afraid of the croſs or the conflict; for they will themſelves deſert and diſcourage others. But above all others miniſters ſhould be valiant in this warfare, and by their example, as well as their exhortations, encourage the people to fight the good fight of faith. Finally, whilſt we ſhew no mercy to any ſin, and will have no friendſhip with any tempter, let us ſhew a ſpirit of peace, forgiveneſs, and benevolence towards all mankind.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—9.] This law was intended to increaſe the horror of the Iſraelites for the crime of murder, and to promote the detection of the criminal, by making the affair public and ſolemn, by putting numbers upon enquiry, by calling upon every one to clear himſelf, and by warning all men not to conceal the criminal.—The heifer, that had never drawn in the yoke, repreſented the murderer, the ſon of Belial, who refuſed to bear the yoke of God's law: the rough valley denoted the worthleſſneſs of the criminal's character, and the diſagreeableneſs of the buſineſs. The cutting off the neck of the heifer, not by the prieſt but by the elders, expreſſed the deſert of the criminal, and their readineſs thus to puniſh him if they could detect him. The waſhing of their hands was a proteſtation of innocence and ignorance concerning the murder and the murderer; and the prayers, which the prieſts offered for the people as the redeemed of the Lord, ſhewed how murder contaminates and leaves guilt upon every land, and every perſon, that does not endeavour by all proper means to bring the criminal to condign puniſhment; and the whole ſhadowed forth the atonement and interceſſion of Chriſt, through which iniquity is pardoned by a merciful God to his redeemed people. The inquiſition devolving upon that city, which was found by meaſuring, (if there were any doubt,) to be the neareſt to the murdered perſon, might alſo denote, that all the people ſhould keep at the utmoſt diſtance from ſuch crimes, and from every thing which could excite ſuſpicion of them.

V. 10—14. The caſe here regulated would inevitably take place on ſome occaſions; and this ſtatute does not imply any approbation of an Iſraelite's marrying an heathen captive, induced merely by her beauty; eſpecially as the regulation does not even exclude the caſe of thoſe who were previouſly married. If however ſuch an extravagant paſſion were conceived, a man was not allowed to uſe force or authority to gratify his inclination, or to proceed with

precipi-

11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;

12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails;

13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandize of her, because thou has humbled her.

15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, *both* the beloved and the hated; and *if* the first-born son be her's that was hated:

16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the first-born:

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born *is* his.

18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:

19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;

20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton and a drunkard.

21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

22 And

precipitation; but, by delay, opportunity was given to the violent affection to subside, and for reason and religion to resume their influence. By taking the captive into the house, her disposition would better be discovered; and, if that proved disagreeable, the passion might be abated. The embellishments of her person being changed for the mean and unsightly habit of a mourner, might tend to diminish her attractions. In the mean time she would have an opportunity of learning the Jewish religion; and some think, that the change of her attire, the cutting off her hair, and the paring of her nails, were the external signs of her renouncing the Gentile worship, and becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, without which the marriage was not allowable. Her grief also for the death of her parents, if slain, or for her separation from them, would subside, and her mind be more reconciled to her condition; and if at last the Israelite continued in the same mind, he might marry her. But in case he *humbled her*, and afterwards did not choose to continue her as his wife, he must not keep her as a slave, or sell her, but give her her liberty, and act towards her, according to the regulations made concerning women when divorced by their husbands. (*Notes*, xxiv. 1—5.) All these circumstance would help to increase the caution of the Israelites, and tend to prevent them from rashly entering into such improper connections.

V. 15—17.] As this passage may with equal propriety be translated, *If a man have had two wives*, it does not *exclusively* apply to the case of polygamy, but equally to that of him who had two *wives in succession*. In either case the double portion, which according to custom was allotted to the heir, must be given to the eldest, though not the son of the best beloved wife; which would counteract the effect of such unjust and unreasonable partialities as are frequently entertained, and be a sort of compensation to her who had the misfortune to be *comparatively slighted and hated*.

V. 18—21.] This law, though its aspect is severe, has mercy couched under that severity: prevention of crimes was its manifest intention, and it could not fail of producing most salutary effects, as far as any regard was paid to it. The parents were the only prosecutors. Both father and mother must concur in the prosecution; and at the last the elders of the city would judge whether their son deserved death or not. All these circumstances would concur in preventing the frequent execution of the awful sentence; and, if that event ever took place, it must excite general attention and even terror: whilst being held *in terrorem* over the heads of the Israelitish youth, it must corroborate the parents authority, give weight to their commands, reproofs, and corrections, and create an additional fear of provoking their deep resentment. It would also fortify young men against the enticements of bad companions, and the force of strong temptations, and thus check the progress of wickedness. Moreover, it would be a constant admonition to parents to watch over their children very narrowly, and not improperly to indulge them, or withhold correction, but to establish their authority over them whilst young, to pray for them, and give them proper admonitions, and to check the first buddings of vice, and to set them a wholesome example. These effects the very existence of this law would have upon them, in proportion as they regarded the word of God; and the latest ought to have upon us.

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree;
23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

CHAP. XXII.

Contains laws, 1st. For restoring strayed cattle or lost property, and for lifting up cattle which was fallen, 1—4. 2d. For the distinction of the sexes by their apparel; for sparing the old bird, when caught upon the nest; for making battlements to the houses; forbidding needless mixtures; and commanding fringes upon their garments, 5—12. 3d. Concerning a woman accused by her husband of fornication before marriage, 13—21. 4th. For the punishment of adulteries, rapes, fornication, and incest, 22—30.

THOU shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.
2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or

V. 22, 23.] The Israelites did not execute criminals by *hanging*, as among us, nor by *crucifixion*: yet after they were dead, in detestation of their crimes, their bodies were ignominiously suspended, or gibbeted on a tree. But in honour of human nature, which was at first formed after the image of God, was afterwards made the temple in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and will hereafter, in innumerable instances, partake of a glorious resurrection, the body of an Israelite might not hang all night in this situation, whatever his crimes had been, as that would even defile the land. In the current opinion, they, who were thus suspended, were deemed *accursed of God*, and devoted to utter destruction: but the Spirit of God dictated this expression with reference to him who "was made a curse for us," (*Gal.* iii. 13.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Prevention of crimes is always preferable to punishment, and the wisdom of laws should be judged of by this tendency. Whatever can increase the horror which we naturally feel of enormous wickedness, or cause the conscience to recoil at the thought of it, must tend to counteract the violence of the passions, and the force of temptations, and to excite watchfulness against the occasions and inlets to vice. Such were the laws which God enacted for Israel; and it were well if the spirit of them were more infused into our modern statutes. The dread of murder should in an especial manner be deeply impressed on every heart: and in detecting and punishing all who *in any form* are guilty of it, magistrates, ministers, old and young, ought to concur; and that man should be adjudged a public enemy, not only who is accessary to the commission of this crime, but who assists the criminal in eluding or escaping justice, by which the guilt of innocent blood rests upon the land. But alas! all that most of us can do in preventing the increase of *this national guilt*, is by our secret earnest prayers!—Reason and religion, with combined force, forbid us to lay the reins upon the neck of our headstrong lusts, and command us to teach our strongest inclinations to brook denial or delay, and to view the objects of our inordinate affections, as stript of all their adventitious charms, and as they really are in themselves, with all their defects and deformities, in order to abate the vehemency of passion. Considered thus coolly, we may perhaps, before it be too late, have our admiration changed into disgust, and many fatal consequences may be prevented. But inhumanity, treachery, and injustice can in no case be palliated or excused, though called by soft names, and varnished over with plausible pretences. Irregular indulgences frequently end in dislike, and in ill-treatment of that very object who was inordinately loved! thus instead of compensation for an injury, (for which indeed no adequate compensation can be rendered,) more injuries are committed! but for all these things God will bring men into judgment. How much more reasonable and comfortable is it to observe the original appointment of marriage, than either to be involved in such circumstances, or to occasion domestic broils by deviating from it!—The Lord will plead the cause of the oppressed, and will not allow that injustice should be done to any one, either from *partiality* or covetousness. Such injustice is frequently committed by men in disposing of their substance by will; and it may form the last action of their lives, which all who fear God would carefully avoid.—Disobedience to parental authority must be extremely evil, when so severe a punishment was denounced by God himself; nor is it less provoking to him now, though it escapes punishment in this world.—But when young people become early slaves to their sensual appetites, the heart soon grows hard and the conscience callous, and we can expect no other but obstinate rebellion and utter destruction. They who would escape ruin must flee youthful lusts, listen to the instructions of their parents, and submit to reproof and correction; and if parents would not have their children their greatest sorrow, they should train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What then do we deserve for our rebellion against the Father of our Spirits? We were indeed under an aweful curse; but Christ hath purchased redemption by becoming a curse for us: yet whilst we continue in sin, we have no reason to suppose, that any benefit will thence accrue to us; rather our condemnation will thus be aggravated. Let us then fear adding obstinacy to our rebellion, and remember, that though the human body, after death, ought not to be treated with degradation by man; yet God will doom both the bodies and souls of the wicked, "to depart accursed "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" whilst "the righteous shall shine forth as the "sun in the kingdom of their Father."

or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.

3 In likemanner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.

4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift *them* up again.

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be* young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:

7 *But* thou shalt in any wise, let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and *that* thou mayest prolong *thy* days.

8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

9 Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.

10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.

11 Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, *as* of woollen and linen together.

12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest *thyself*.

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,

14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:

15 Then shall the father of the damsel and her mother take and bring forth *the tokens of* the damsel's virginity, unto the elders of the city in the gate:

16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;

17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 5. *The woman*, &c.] This prohibition might have some respect to the customs of the heathen worshippers, who shamefully violated it for the worst of purposes: but the law is of *moral tendency, and of general obligation*, or it would not have been added, "for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord," which is never annexed to a *merely ceremonial institution*. The practice prohibited is not only indecent and of bad appearance, but it hath in all ages been made subservient to lewdness, and to obtain opportunities of perpetrating the grossest crimes; to prevent which it is of vast importance, that the distinction of the sexes should be visibly marked in their garments without variation.—Let stage-players, and such sort of persons look to it, how they will answer to God for their continual violation of this express commandment. Nor will those be held guiltless who encourage and reward them for such disobedience: and let young people remember that this change of apparel is not to be considered as a frolic, but as an act of rebellion against God.—The spirit of the commandment also requires the distinction of the appearance, deportment, and occupations of the sexes. A man appearing effeminate, and affecting the appropriated employments of women: and a woman of a masculine appearance and behaviour, who engages in the exercises of men, are unnatural and offensive characters.

V. 6, 7.] This law might be intended to cultivate tenderness, and prevent the destruction of any species. But such minute requirements were probably intentional tests, by which it would be proved, whether the people would prefer God's will to their own inclination, when the reason of the commandment was not obvious: therefore a promise to the obedient is annexed.

V. 8. *When*, &c.] (*Ex.* xxi. 28—36.) They who are wanting in circumspection to preserve man's life, are adjudged accessaries to it's destruction.

V. 9—12.] (*Notes*, *Lev.* xix. 19. *Numb.* xv. 38, 39.)

V. 13—21.] This law, like many others, was intended to prevent wickedness, by the fear of detection and punishment. The dread of a future discovery, productive of such tremendous consequences, could not fail but much increase the natural barriers of chastity, and counteract the effects of sinful passions and strong temptations among the Hebrew young women. And it would also prevent a hard-hearted husband from robbing his injured wife of her reputation, when his affections were transferred to another object. The imposition, practised by a woman upon the man whom she married, was considered as equivalent to infidelity to his bed after marriage.

V. 25.

speech *against her*, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these *are the tokens of* my daughter's virginity: and they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18 And the elders of that city shall take that man, and chastise him.

19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred *shekels* of silver, and *give* them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife: he may not put her away all his days.

20 But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of* virginity be not found for the damsel;

21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die; because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman. So shalt thou put away evil from Israel.

23 If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

25 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her; then the man only that lay with her shall die:

26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin *worthy* of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even *so* is this matter:

27 For he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was* none to save her.

28 If a man find a damsel, *that is* a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;

29 Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

30 A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

CHAP.

V. 25. *Betrothed*, &c.] In all these laws the betrothed damsel was considered as the *wife* of the man to whom she was engaged, though they had not come together; and therefore the crime was adjudged adultery. But a charitable supposition is admitted in the damsel's favour, in case she was found in a solitary place.

V. 28—30.] (*Ex.* xxii. 16, 17. *Lev.* xvii.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we duly regarded the golden rule of "doing to others, "as we would they should do unto us," many particular precepts of God's word might be omitted. Equity and benevolence would teach us not to regard trouble and expence in doing a kind action to our neighbour; and remind us that we can have no property in any thing that is found, so long as there is any probability of discovering the owner. If a merciful man would assist another's beast that was fallen down, much more should we hasten to the relief of a brother, who is fallen into distress or poverty: and most of all should we be ready to restore, in the spirit of meekness, him who hath been overcome by temptation and fallen into sin; as conscious that we may soon want the same gentleness and assistance. If we would approve ourselves to be God's peculiar people, we must have respect to the will and glory of God, and not to the vain fashions of the world. Even in putting on our garments, as well as in eating and drinking; all must be done with a serious regard to the preservation of our own and others purity, in heart and action, that our garb may testify whose servants we are, and remind us what our conduct ought to be. Our obedience should also be universal, not only to the weightier, but even to the minuter matters of the law, that it may be well with us. Yea our eye should be single, our heart simple, and our behaviour all of a piece.—The violation of chastity being so great a wickedness, and in females especially of such fatal consequences: how cautious should they be what company they keep, what places they frequent, to what language they listen, what books they read, and into what ensnaring situations they venture! Seriously should they daily meditate on God's abhorrence of such crimes, the certain detection and punishment of the wicked in a future state, and the fatal effects which will probably follow in this world; that their minds may be fortified against temptation, by a dread of sin and of its consequences. How carefully should parents keep out of their sight and way whatever can pollute their imaginations, or inflame their passions! and how should all join in execrat-

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains laws, 1st. Concerning those, who were not to enter into the congregation, 1—8. 2d. For keeping the camps of Israel free from moral, ceremonial, and natural pollution, 9—14. 3d. For protecting slaves from cruelty and oppression; and against whoredom, sodomy, and usury, 15—20. 4th. For the performance of vows, 21—23. 5th. For regulating their conduct in a neighbour's vineyard and cornfield, 24, 25.

HE that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even unto his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.

6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he *is* thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.

8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

9 When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

10 If there be among you any man that is not clean, by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp; he shall not come within the camp:

11 But

execrating those wretches, who wantonly bring such ruin upon their fellow creatures, for the sake of gratifying a mean sensual inclination: nor is the cruelty of those much less to be abhorred, who rob the innocent of their reputation by infamous slanders, to gratify their malice or any other vile passion. We should never forget the peculiar atrociousness of adultery in every form, and the punishment which awaits those who are guilty of it. We may also recollect that all *deception* in contracting marriage is both very wicked, and a source of future misery: that the nearer we stand related to God, the more inexcusable are our crimes, "folly in Israel" being worse than elsewhere: and that the most favourable construction should be put on doubtful actions; and a discrimination made betwixt different degrees of criminality. Finally our purity should be dearer to us than our life; and our cry to God for help in temptation should be no less earnest, than the cry of a person in danger of being murdered. When we thus call upon him, he is ever near and ready to assist us, and his grace will be always sufficient for us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1—8.] We cannot suppose that this law excluded a mutilated Israelite from the benefits of civil society, or the advantages of divine ordinances for the salvation of their souls: nor that persons of the aforementioned nations were totally rejected from becoming proselytes to the true religion. But probably they were excluded from places of trust and authority, in church or state, and were not permitted to enter into the court of the tabernacle, or in some other respects restricted from full communion with the church. It was, however, a discriminating and graceful distinction intelligible enough to the Israelites, though, like several other of the injunctions in this part of the law, not so easily understood at present.—These statutes seem also to have been intended for the *prevention of sin*, as well as for preserving the church and ordinances of God in purity and honour. Parents would thus be kept from mutilating their children out of lucrative motives, a practice very common in those ages and countries; as well as from such crimes, as tended to mark their innocent offspring with disgrace. And the Lord was pleased to distinguish the descendents of those nations, who opposed or tempted his people, by similar tokens of his disapprobation.—Ammonites and Moabites were not permitted to enjoy the full benefits of Israelites till the tenth generation after they had been proselyted: and no amicable alliance might be made with those nations so long as they existed.—Edom, though unkind, being more nearly related was to be forgiven. As the Israelites had at first, in their extreme distress, been hospitably entertained in Egypt, they were required to forgive the *consequent* oppression which they had suffered, and to requite the *preceding* kindness; and an Egyptian in the third generation might become entitled to all the privileges of a native Israelite.

V. 9—14.] These precepts not only relate to the camp of Israel, whilst they continued together, previously to their conquest of and settlement in the land; but at all times when they went forth to fight with their enemies. They were first to be reminded to use vigorous measures for reformation; and to pay a strict attention to their ceremonial purifications: and then not to forget a due regard to natural cleanliness, not only from decency, and for health's sake,

11 But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash *himself* with water; and, when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp *again*.

12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad.

13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon: and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back, and cover that which cometh from thee:

14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee: therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

15 Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee:

16 He shall dwell with thee, *even* among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow; for even both these *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury.

20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to, in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.

23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform, *even* a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

24 When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put *any* in thy vessel.

25 When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.

CHAP.

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sake, but from respect to that God of purity, who as it were, headed their armies and encamped among them; and as an emblem of their inward purity.

V. 15, 16.] We cannot suppose that this law required the Israelites to entertain slaves, who had robbed their masters or left their service without any cause; but such only as were cruelly treated and fled to them for protection, especially from the heathen nations. To them they were commanded to afford shelter and shew kindness, both in order to recommend their religion, and to give these strangers an opportunity of learning it.

V. 17, 18.] The magistrate was commanded not to connive at, much less to license, houses of prostitution and uncleanness; and not to allow any person to carry on the infamous trade of a pimp, prostitute, or sodomite, but to expel and extirpate them to the uttermost. The priests must not accept any oblations or sacrifices brought by persons of such vile characters: for God would not; though they should attempt to stifle their wickedness, or compensate for it, by making and performing religious vows. (*Prov.* vii. 14.) If *the price of a dog* be understood literally; not only the vileness of such animals, but their greediness, and their apt resemblance of shameless and perfidious persons, must be considered as the reason of the prohibition.

but many understand it of persons guilty for hire of unnatural crimes. (*Phil.* iii. 2. *Rev.* xxii. 15.)

V. 19, 20.] *Notes, Exod.* xxii. 25, 26.

V. 24, 25.] This law would be a kindness to the labourers, the poor, the widows, and the travellers: it was a pledge given the Israelites of the fruitfulness of the land, whilst they continued obedient: it inculcated liberality and instructed them not to encroach upon each each.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to value the participation of the privileges of God's people, both for ourselves and for our children, above all other advantages; and carefully avoid whatever may throw a bar in our way or in their's. No personal blemishes, no crimes of our progenitors, no difference of nation, can seclude us under the Christian dispensation, but an unsound heart will deprive *us*; and a bad example, an improper education, and even unsuitable marriages, may exclude *our children* from those blessings. The conduct of God, as *the righteous governor of the universe*, is not recorded for the imitation of *private persons*; but all men ought to follow the example of his patience, long-suffering, readiness to forgive, and kindness to his enemies. Nor should we ever forget how he turns the curses of [illegible]

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains laws, 1st. Regulating divorces, and granting exemptions to newly-married men, 1—5. *2d. For punishing men-stealers, regulating the matter of pledges, and reminding the people of the institutions concerning leprosy,* 6—13. *3d. Regulating the treatment of hired servants, restricting the execution of criminals, and prohibiting the perverting of judgment,* 14—17. *4th. Requiring that the gleanings should be left for the poor: the whole being enforced by the consideration of the redemption of Israel from Egypt,* 18—22.

WHEN a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife.*

3 And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife:

4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled: for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall

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into blessings, in behalf of those whom he loves and teaches to love him.—The more imminent and evident danger we are exposed to, the greater should be our watchfulness, self-examination, and earnestness in prayer for forgiveness, peace with God and protection from him: and the scourge of war should remind the governors of kingdoms, and the commanders of armies, to exert themselves for reformation, and an attendence upon the ordinances of God. Nor can the help of the Lord be warrantably depended on by societies, or by individuals, whilst iniquity is indulged and connived at.—No natural filthiness is so loathsome to our senses, as the uncleanness of the heart is offensive to an holy God: in vain therefore do pompous forms of godliness, costly oblations, or multiplied acts of shewy beneficence, strive to compensate for, or cover the iniquity of those who indulge unlawful lusts. Such services are an attempt to bribe the judge of the earth to acquit the wicked, but he abhors the blasphemous endeavour. And whether magistrates can or cannot extirpate such recesses of licentiousness, as are here forbidden; God will exclude for ever from the holy city, and shut up for ever in the lake of fire, all who persist in, or encourage such abuses. The people of God must also keep at a distance from cruelty and oppression; and ever be ready to patronize the cause of the oppressed. Fidelity to all their engagements, and liberality without grudging to all around them should mark their characters; for God is able to make all sufficiency to abound towards them: and at the same time they should be the last persons to encroach upon others. In fine, temperance, chastity, purity, equity, mercy, and truth, are the never failing fruits of that Spirit which dwells in all the true disciples of Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1—4.] Divorces were an abuse of marriage, consequent upon man's depravity, the inconstancy of his mind, and the impetuosity of his passions. This customary abuse God did not please, *in the judicial law, the magistrate's rule,* totally to prohibit; lest it should occasion the cruel treatment, or even the murder, of those women who were become disagreeable to their husbands. The *uncleanness*, on account of which Moses by God's authority, "*suffered* them, for the hardness of their "hearts, to put away their wives," was not adultery, or any suspicion of it; for both these cases were otherwise provided against; (*Num.* v. 11—31.) but probably some ceremonial uncleanness, which barred cohabitation, (*Lev.* xv. 25—28;) or some other natural or moral objection which formed a real grievance. In the days of Christ the Jewish teachers, having construed the *permission* into *a commandment*, interpreted it so largely as to extend it to the merest trifle; so that a licentious mind could not desire more allowance. Hence it prevailed to the disuse of polygamy, and to the still greater hardship of the women, who were divorced, one after another, under colour of this law, for the most trivial causes, to make way for a new object of the roving affections. This accounts for the discourses of Christ being more explicitly against *divorces*, though the reason of them equally determines against *polygamy*; "for from the beginning it was not so." (*Matt.* xix. 3—10. *Mark*, x. 2—12.)—But whilst divorces were allowed, they were also regulated. A bill of divorce was given, properly authenticated, and probably specifying the reason; and we may suppose some provision was also made the repudiated woman out of her husband's substance. Nor was it any part of God's law to prohibit either party from marrying again: which absurd human policy is often no better than authorizing fornication. The woman might marry again and again, if set at liberty; but must never more return to her former husband. This restriction, whilst it would operate as a check to inconstancy and rashness in the husband, would prevent the shameful practice of exchanging and lending wives, which was the custom in many places: and thus the Israelites would be preserved from that national guilt, which such practices contracted. And as far as these regulations were adhered to, some of the worst effects of divorces would in good measure be prevented.

V. 5. *When*, &c.] This considerate and condescending exemption would operate, in fixing the affections of married persons, and in preventing divorces; for early or long separa-

shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall chear up his wife which he hath taken.

6 No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh *a man's* life to pledge.

7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil away from among you.

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, *so* ye shall observe to do.

9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

10 When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

11 Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.

12 And if the man *be* poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge.

13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

14 Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant *that is* poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates:

15 At his day thou shalt give *him* his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he *is* poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless, nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall

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separations tend to alienate the affections, and form temptations to inconstancy.

V. 6. *For he*, &c.] Hand mills were then generally used in every family for grinding their own corn, and men would be deprived of the means of preparing their necessary food, if the millstones were taken from them. The same reason holds good against receiving in pledge, or distraining for debt, any of those instruments of labour by which men are accustomed to earn their livelihood.

V. 7. *Stealing*, &c.] Christianity has annihilated those distinctions of nations, which, for typical and political reasons, were during a time established; and in such matters every man is now our brother, whatever be his nation, complexion, or creed. How then can the merchandise of men and women be carried on, without transgressing this commandment, or abetting those who do? This plain question is worthy the consideration of such as grow rich by this disgraceful traffic. An inhabitant of England, if he stay at home and steal a horse, or sheep, is condemned to death: but if he take a voyage to Africa, he may steal, or purchase of those who do steal, hundreds of men and women, and not only escape with impunity, but grow great like a prince by the traffic! Contrast this with the law of God: Whoever stole cattle restored four or five fold: whoever stole one human being, though *an infant*, or *an idiot*, must die.—May we not call upon British legislators to rectify this flagrant abuse! We may and ought: and God grant we may not continue to call upon them in vain; but that a more generous spirit may diffuse itself among us.

V. 9. *Unto Miriam*, &c.] The leprosy of Miriam was a judgment inflicted by God; under this rebuke she humbled herself, notwithstanding her rank and character; and she was excluded from the camp, but was restored upon her submission, at the request of Moses. Hence the people might learn how to conduct themselves in similar circumstances. (*Notes*, &c. *Numb.* xii.)

V. 10—13.] Though the Israelites might not take interest of their brethren, they might take a pledge, provided it were something which the borrower could conveniently spare, and which he willingly proposed. But if, in his necessity, he brought what he could not well spare, they were commanded to restore it without delay: and this when done from a right motive, would be accepted as an act of righteousness by a merciful God, and rewarded accordingly, but he would also punish the neglect of it.

V. 16. *The fathers*, &c.] God himself, who can bring good to individuals out of public calamities, might justly involve the children in the parent's punishment: but he would not allow the magistrate to do it, especially in matters of life and death.

PRAC-

shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the works of thine hands.

20 When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow.

21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains laws, 1st. For regulating the scourging of malefactors, 1—3. 2d. Against muzzling the oxen which trode out the corn, 4. 3d. Concerning marrying the widows of brethren who died childless, 5—10. 4th. For the punishment of an immodest woman, 11—12. 5th. Requiring just weights, and measures, 13—16. 6th. For destroying the Amalekites, 17—19.

IF there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment that *the judges* may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

2 And it shall be if the wicked man *be* worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number.

3 Forty stripes ye may give him, *and* not exceed: lest, *if* he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the corn*.

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

6 And it shall be, *that* the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother *which is* dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

7 And if the man like not to take his brother's

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The impetuous lusts and selfish hardness of men's hearts, if not restrained by a constant miracle, or subdued by divine grace, will inevitably occasion manifold abuses in every society, contrary to the moral law of God; nor can the best human laws prevent them.—But these abuses proportionably mar all our comforts, and neither conscience nor prudence will permit a true Christian to fall in with them.—Even where the providence of God, or an indiscreet choice in marriage hath alloted a Christian a trial instead of an help-meet; he will from his heart prefer bearing the cross, to such relief as tends ultimately to licentiousness, confusion, and misery: and divine grace will sanctify this cross, support him under it, and teach him so to behave as will gradually render it more tolerable.—But every method should be used to cement the affections of married persons, and to exclude every temptation to inconstancy.—Whilst we leave those, to the tribunal of God, who prosper by the most horrible oppression, or most infamous traffic: it suffices here to observe, that there are readers, who would be disgusted, were we to follow the inspired writer, in his repeated exhortations to humiliation before God, to purity, piety, justice, mercy, kindness, impartiality, and consideration of the poor and destitute, and to enlarged generosity of spirit.—It is not hard to prove these things to be pleasing unto God, and becoming his redeemed people; the difficulty is, to bring our minds to attend to them in our daily walk and conversation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 2, 3.] Many crimes had been mentioned, for which no punishment was specified. In all these cases it is supposed that scourging was to be used at the discretion of the magistrate, according to the degree and aggravations of the crime. This punishment was inflicted in open court, under the inspection of the judge, and without respect to the rank of the criminal. But lest the malefactor should seem vile, as a slave or a beast, the number of forty stripes must not be exceeded. Lest they should miscount, the Jewish magistrates always confined themselves to thirty-nine, which Paul repeatedly endured. If petty crimes were more generally thus chastised, and capital punishments were less frequent among us; it would be much more advantageous to the community.

V. 4. *Muzzle*, &c.] The Israelites, and most of the ancients, were accustomed to beat out their grain by the feet of oxen, and instruments drawn by them.

V. 5—10.] The custom here regulated had long prevailed; (*Gen.* xxxviii. 8;) and was probably introduced to preserve some remembrance of those who died childless. It seems to have been adopted into the Mosaic law, mainly to preserve the distinction of inheritances, and to favour the regularity of the genealogies until the coming of Christ; as well as to provide for the destitute widow, when the estate devolved to the next heir. If a married man died without issue, his brother was required to marry the widow; and the eldest son of such a marriage inherited the estate of the deceased, and thus preserved his name in the genealogies.—If any one refused to comply with this custom, being averse to the person or character of the widow, he was publicly disgraced. By pulling off his shoe, he was rendered like the slaves, who generally went barefoot; and the widow even spit in, *or before*, his face, in contempt of the man who had thus disgraced

ther's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

8 Then the elders of the city shall call him, and speak unto him: and *if* he stand *to it*, and say, I like not to take her;

9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

11 When men strive together, one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets;

12 Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity *her*.

13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.

14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.

15 *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

16 For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, *are* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even* all *that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *wast* faint and weary; and he feared not God.

19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy

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graced her, and shewn such disrespect to the memory of the deceased.—It is not agreed amongst commentators, whether married men were concerned in this law, or not: and it is not material which way it is determined; as it had reference to a particular case which no longer exists, and therefore *our duty* is not in the least affected by the determination.

V. 13—16.] The Israelites were not only not allowed to use unjust weights and measures; but they might not even keep them in the house. It is observable that this too common practice is branded as "abomination to the Lord" equally with idolatry, adultery, sodomy, &c. (*Notes* &c. *Prov.* xi. 1. xvi. 11. xx. 10. *Amos*, viii. 4—6. *Micah*, vi. 10. 1 *Cor.* vi. 8, 9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In administering justice, equity and impartiality are required to distinguish betwixt the innocent and the guilty, and to proportion punishments to crimes; still leaning to the side of lenity, rather than to that of severity, as aiming at the reformation, and not the destruction, of the criminal himself, as far as public security will admit. Every punishment should be inflicted with solemnity, that all the spectators may be impressed with dread, and be warned not to offend in like manner. And though criminals must be shamed, as well as put to pain, for their warning and humiliation: yet care should be taken, if possible, that they do not appear totally vile: lest, having no further reputation to lose, they should become desperate. Happy are they who are chastened of the Lord for their humiliation, that they should not be condemned with the world to utter destruction.—Kindness is due not only to man but even to the beasts, and whatever living creature contributes to our ease, pleasure, or advantage, should receive from us such reciprocal satisfactions as it is capable of, in proportion to the benefit conferred. How equitable then is it, that ministers, who are instrumental to men's salvation, should be maintained comfortably at their expence!—In all our actions we should seek the good of those around us, especially of the Lord's people, and the spread and continuance of true religion in the next generation: and in contracting marriage especially we should seek a godly seed who may preserve the name of deceased believers, and fill up their places in the church; in every way shewing respect to dead, and kindness to living relatives. For whatever disgrace, we without cause put upon others, will in the event rebound upon ourselves.—A solemn and testified ratification should distinguish the honourable relation of marriage from all illicit connections; and married persons should be known, to preserve them and others from temptation: and though affections cannot be forced, yet they should be subordinated to reason and religion.—The customs and manners of different ages may render that consistent with female delicacy at one time, which would not be deemed so at another: but there are certain outrages to modesty, which no age can tolerate, no provocation or extremity palliate, but which must ever be branded with infamy, and should be punished with unpitying severity.—Every degree of fraudulency is abhorred of God, and should be dreaded by us; for dishonest gain always brings a curse upon men's property, families, and souls: and the day of judgment will bring strange things to light in this respect. Happy they, who now judge themselves, repent, forsake their sins, and put away every evil thing, that they may not then be condemned of the Lord.—Let every persecutor and injurer of God's people hear, and take warning, from the example of the Amalekites: however they now cast off the fear of God, and behave with cruelty and despite to the meek and poor, the Lord will one day plead

thy God hath given thee reſt from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to poſſeſs it, *that* thou ſhalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou ſhalt not forget *it*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. The preſcribed form of preſenting an oblation of the firſt fruits, 1—11. *2d. The preſcribed proteſtation to be uſed every third year reſpecting the ſecond tithes,* 12—15. *3d. A ſummary of the covenant with Iſrael,* 16—19.

AND it ſhall be when thou *art* come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and poſſeſſeſt it, and dwelleſt therein;

2 That thou ſhalt take of the firſt of all the fruit of the earth, which thou ſhalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and ſhalt put *it* in a baſket, and ſhalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God ſhall chooſe to place his name there.

3 And thou ſhalt go unto the prieſt that ſhall be in thoſe days, and ſay unto him, I profeſs this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD ſware unto our fathers for to give us.

4 And the prieſt ſhall take the baſket out of thine hand, and ſet it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

5 And thou ſhalt ſpeak, and ſay before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to periſh *was* my father, and he went down into Egypt, and ſojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:

6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppreſſion:

8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outſtretched arm, and with great terribleneſs, and with ſigns and wonders.

9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 And now, behold, I have brought the firſt-fruits of the land which thou, O LORD, haſt given me. And thou ſhalt ſet it before the LORD thy God, and worſhip before the LORD thy God.

11 And thou ſhalt rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine houſe, thou, and the Levite, and the ſtranger that *is* among you.

12 When thou haſt made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increaſe the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and haſt given *it* unto the Levite, the ſtranger, the father-leſs,

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their cauſe, avenge all the injuſtice done them, and blot out the name of every enemy from under heaven: and the longer judgment tarries, the more dreadful will be it's execution at laſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 2. *Thou ſhalt take*, &c.] This ſtatute probably related to the offering of the firſt-fruits at the day of Pentecoſt, (*Ex.* xxiii. 16—19. *Deut.* xvi. 10.) The people were required to preſent *ſome part* of every kind of production of their lands, and the firſt ripe of each, of which the prieſts had the uſe: but the *quantity* was not preſcribed; for it was a free-will offering, a thankful acknowledgment, to the denial of their own appetite which would eſpecially crave the firſt ripe fruit; and therefore their liberality was put to the trial. But as every production would not be ripe at the ſame time, and ſome could not be preſerved till the reſt were ready: we muſt admit ſome limitation, and ſuppoſe that the beſt and choiceſt, and ſuch as could be beſt preſerved, were thus preſented; and the reſt, as occaſion required, offered to the prieſts in their ſeveral cities. Some ſuppoſe likewiſe, that in caſe of hindrance this baſket might be preſented at another time than at the feaſt of Pentecoſt; but that every Iſraelite, who poſſeſſed land, was required annually to make this preſentation.

V. 5—11.] Jacob is called a *Syrian*, becauſe he lived ſo long in Syria, or *Meſopotamia* which was one diſtrict of that country. He was diſtreſſed when he went to Laban; when he returned his life was endangered both from him, and from his brother Eſau: he was afterwards ready to periſh by famine in Canaan, which occaſioned his removal into Egypt, where his poſterity were miſerably enſlaved: yet notwithſtanding all theſe hindrances, the Lord's promiſes had been punctually performed. Theſe mercies the Iſraelites were directed to acknowledge annually in this ſolemn manner; to keep up among them a remembrance of them, and to remind them of their obligations to love and ſerve God; that he might receive from them the due tribute of praiſe and gratitude.

V. 12—15.] This related to the ſecond tithe before conſidered (*Note*, xiv. 22—29.) Once in three years this ſolemn proteſtation was required from every proprietor of land

less, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gate, and be filled;

13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*;

14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away *ought* thereof for *any* unclean *use*, nor given *ought* thereof for the dead; *but* I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, *and* have done according to all that thou hast commanded me:

15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes, and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:

18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people; as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldest keep all his commandments;

19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains injunctions, 1st. To write the law upon plaistered stones in Canaan, with certain solemnities, 1—10. 2d. To pronounce blessings upon the obedient from mount Gerizzim, and curses upon the disobedient from mount Ebal, 11—26.

AND

land in Canaan, probably in the presence of the priests at the court of the tabernacle. They declared that the whole of this second tithe had been employed to those purposes for which it was appropriated: and that no part had been used by them in mourning, or at funerals which rendered them unclean; nor in any superstitious ceremony. As the matter lay very much betwixt God and their conscience; this protestation was the more suitable, and would both tend to remind them of their duty, and render them afraid of neglecting it.

V. 17—19.] By acceding to the national covenant the Israelites openly professed themselves the servants and worshippers of Jehovah, and engaged to walk obediently in his commandments: and by admitting them into it, he avowed himself to be their God, their protector, and portion; and engaged that, whilst they were obedient, he would prosper and advance them, as well as continue to them their distinguishing religious advantages. All this was an external representation of that covenant-relation, which subsists betwixt a reconciled God and every true believer; and of the privileges and duties belonging to it, and resulting from it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whatever God at any time hath promised will assuredly in due season be fulfilled to the persons specified, notwithstanding obstacles, improbabilities, and apparent delays: and in all our comforts we should observe the faithfulness, as well as of the goodness of God. It is advantageous to ourselves frequently to meditate on the Lord's dealings with us, and to consider from how low an estate, and through what impediments, he hath brought us to our present comforts and prospects: and it is so edifying to others, on proper occasions, to speak on such humiliating and enlivening subjects, that whatever leads us to them is well worthy of our regard. Nor can any thing be more reasonable, than that we should both by word and deed render our God the glory due unto his name. We should honour him with our first and best in every thing, to the denial of our own appetites and passions: on some occasions it is honourable to God, and edifying to his church, when it is done *publicly*: it is always a source of rejoicing to ourselves when it is done *properly*.—At the day of judgment we must render an account of our whole stewardship; and it is therefore our wisdom to be frequently calling ourselves to a previous account, how we employ our time, possessions, or endowments.—We must be watchful, not only to avoid dishonesty, but that our conversation may be without covetousness, that pious and charitable uses have their portion, and that temperance and beneficence have been duly regarded by us, according to the commandments of God. Thus shall we evince that, according to the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, the Lord is our God, and we are his people; and that we are waiting in his appointed way, for the performance of his gracious and glorious promises.—It may at some times consist with humility and tend to edification, openly to protest our integrity: and at all times the consciousness of it is matter of rejoicing, (2 *Cor.* i. 12,) and of confidence at the throne of grace, (1 *John*, iii. v. 20—22;) and in all our supplications we should remember to plead for peculiar blessings on our fellow Christians, and the extending of our privileges to our fellow sinners even to the ends of the earth.

CHAP.

AND Moſes, with the elders of Iſrael, commanded the people, ſaying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.

2 And it ſhall be, on the day when ye ſhall paſs over Jordan, unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou ſhalt ſet thee up great ſtones, and plaiſter them with plaiſter:

3 And thou ſhalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art paſſed over; that thou mayeſt go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promiſed thee.

4 Therefore it ſhall be, when ye be gone over Jordan, *that* ye ſhall ſet up theſe ſtones which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou ſhalt plaiſter them with plaiſter.

5 And there ſhalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of ſtones: thou ſhalt not lift up *any* iron *tool* upon them.

6 Thou ſhalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole ſtones; and thou ſhalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God.

7 And thou ſhalt offer peace-offerings, and ſhalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

8 And thou ſhalt write upon the ſtones all the words of this law very plainly.

9 And Moſes, and the prieſts the Levites, ſpake unto all Iſrael, ſaying, Take heed, and hearken, O Iſrael; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God.

10 Thou ſhalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day.

11 And Moſes charged the people the ſame day, ſaying.

12 Theſe ſhall ſtand upon mount Gerizzim to bleſs the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Iſſachar, and Joſeph, and Benjamin.

13 And theſe ſhall ſtand upon mount Ebal to curſe; Reuben, Gad, and Aſher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites ſhall ſpeak, and ſay unto all the men of Iſrael with a loud voice,

15 Curſed

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *Moſes* &c.] In the foregoing chapter Moſes finiſhed his repetition and explanation of the law, with thoſe particular exhortations which he annexed. Here, in conjunction with the ſeventy elders, (*Num.* xi,) he proceeded to enjoin two ſolemn obſervances, which were to be attended to after the entrance of Iſrael into Canaan, the former to aſſiſt their memories, the latter to affect their hearts.

V. 3. *All the*, &c.] It is much diſputed what *law* was written upon theſe plaiſtered ſtones, nor is the ſolution very eaſy. Some ſuppoſe that it was the whole book of Deuteronomy; others the preceptive part of it; others the ten commandments only; and others reſtrict the writing to the latter part of this chapter. And indeed whatever elſe was intended, as the ſtones were placed upon mount Ebal, whence the *curſes* were denounced, it is probable that *theſe* were added: but we may conclude that at leaſt the ten commandments, and the great outlines of the whole law, were likewiſe inſcribed.

V. 5—7.] (*Note, Exod.* xx. 25.) In ordinary caſes no altar might be uſed except that at the door of the tabernacle, which was made of wood and braſs: but the Lord reſerved to himſelf the privilege of diſpenſing with his own laws; and on this occaſion, directed an altar of rough ſtones to be formed, in order to this renewed confirmation of the covenant, ſimilar to that uſed when it was firſt ratified at mount Sinai, (*Notes &c. Exod.* xxiv.) This altar built upon mount Ebal, and the ſacrifices of burnt-offerings on this occaſion offered, aptly taught the people that the curſe of the law could only be removed by him, who, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, was made a curſe for ſinners: and the peace-offerings, with the ſacred feaſt, implied that joyful communion with a reconciled God may be maintained through Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding the moſt tremendous curſes of the law.

V. 12. *To bleſs*, &c,] By this ſolemnity the whole people of Iſrael deliberately approved of, and conſented to, their national covenant; declared that they expected the bleſſings ſtipulated to them only in a way of obedience; and confeſſed that, individually and nationally, they ſhould merit, and might expect, to be accurſed of God, if they were diſobedient to his commandments. No mention is made of the ſpecial acts of obedience on account of which the bleſſings were pronounced; as they do not belong to thoſe who obey ſome and neglect others of God's commandments; "for he that keepeth the whole law, and "offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." No man therefore can claim the recompence of his obedience as a debt, but all muſt receive it as an unmerited favour: and the ſilence of the Scriptures is to be conſidered in ſuch caſes as conveying important inſtruction.—It is obſervable, that the tribes, from whom the bleſſings were pronounced, were all deſcended from Leah and Rachel the free-women.

V. 14. *And the Levites*, &c.] Some of the Levites were appointed to ſpeak in the name of God on this occaſion; but the bulk of the tribe ſtood upon the oppoſite mountain.

V. 15.

15 Curſed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftſman, and putteth *it* in a ſecret *place*. And all the people ſhall anſwer, and ſay, Amen.

16 Curſed *be* he that ſetteth light by his father or his mother: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

17 Curſed *be* he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

18 Curſed *be* he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

19 Curſed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the ſtranger, fatherleſs, and widow: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

20 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; becauſe he uncovereth his father's ſkirt: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

21 Curſed *be* he that lieth with any manner of beaſt: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

22 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his ſiſter, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

23 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his mother-in-law: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

24 Curſed *be* he that ſmiteth his neighbour ſecretly: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

25 Curſed *be* he that taketh reward to ſlay an innocent perſon: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

26 Curſed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

CHAP.

V. 15. *In a ſecret place*, &c.] Open idolatry was capitally puniſhed by the magiſtrate: but if concealed from man's eye, God would puniſh it himſelf.

All the people, &c.] By this ſolemn aſſent to the words of theſe curſes, the Iſraelites did not *wiſh* or *conſent* that either themſelves or their neighbours ſhould be accurſed; but merely declared their belief that ſuch guilty perſons would be ſo, and their acknowledgment that they deſerved the curſe; and that they expected no other themſelves but to be accurſed, if they committed the crimes which were ſpecified. *Were there no other objection* to the ſolemnity preſcribed by the church of England on Aſh-Wedneſday, it would be very trifling to ſay, that *people go to church to curſe their neighbours*: for the *Amen*, now ſpoken by profeſſing chriſtians, means neither more or leſs, than that which God commanded the Iſraelites to annex to the ſame curſes; and under every diſpenſation, they who live in the practice of groſs wickedneſs are accurſed and ſhould be reminded of it.

V. 18. *Maketh the blind*, &c.] By parity of reaſon, it is equally criminal wittingly to give bad counſel to the ignorant, or to injure thoſe who cannot take care of themſelves.

V. 26. *That confirmeth*, &c.] This is rendered by Paul, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things "which are written in the book of the law to do them." (*Gal.* iii. 10.) Whence we learn, that *conſtant obedience* is the *confirmation* here ſpoken of: but we are more eſpecially taught, that theſe curſes were not only intended to deter the Iſraelites from ſin, but to ſhew them their need of mercy, and to eſtabliſh the diſtinction betwixt the righteouſneſs of faith, and the righteouſneſs of works. This eſpecially muſt be the meaning of this laſt verſe, by which all the Iſraelites were evidently called to condemn themſelves, as deſerving of the curſe denounced. And this truth, being properly perceived, forms the true preparation of heart for underſtanding and valuing the ſalvation of the goſpel, according to the new covenant of mercy in Chriſt alone.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As there is ſuch an unaptneſs in our fallen nature to retain ſuitable impreſſions of the things pertaining to God, we have occaſion to uſe every proper means of aſſiſting our memories, awakening our conſciences, or affecting our hearts with them. But, bleſſed be God, the numerous printed copies of the ſcriptures amongſt us, if properly ſtudied, and thus familiarized to our minds, may ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſuch methods as were preſcribed to Iſrael: *and the end of the goſpel miniſtry is, and the aim of all preachers ought to be, to make the word of God as plain as poſſible to the meaneſt capacities.* Yet except the Spirit of God efficaciouſly ſucceed their labours, we ſhall not even by theſe means be made wiſe unto ſalvation; for this bleſſing we ſhould therefore daily and earneſtly pray. In like manner, without the interpoſition of the atoning blood of Chriſt, we ſinners can neither have communion with a holy God, nor perform any acceptable obedience to him: for his righteous law peremptorily requires an uninterrupted, ſpiritual, and perſevering obedience to every precept, and condemns every one who, at any time or in any inſtance, tranſgreſſes it. Under its aweful curſe therefore we tranſgreſſors remain, until the redemption of Chriſt be applied to our hearts: and under that curſe every unbeliever will periſh for ever, and be conſtrained to acknowledge the juſtice of his condemnation. Happy they, who here "ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God," and, as ſelf-condemned ſinners, ſeek ſalvation from his mercy through Jeſus Chriſt, and according to that new covenant of which *he* is Surety: for them there is no condemnation, their "ſalvation is for ever, and their righteouſneſs ſhall "not be aboliſhed;" and every bleſſing is enſured to them by promiſe, by covenant, and by oath. But none, who live in the habitual practice of any known ſin, are partakers of theſe privileges; and however covertly they may conceal their wickedneſs from the cognizance of the magiſtrates, or the cenſures of miniſters and the church, the awful curſe of God will light upon them, with weight proportioned to their abuſed privileges and their hypocritical profeſſion.—Wherever the grace of God bringeth ſalvation, it teacheth the believer to deny ſuch ungodlineſs, and ſuch worldly luſts, as are here mentioned; and to live

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1st, Manifold blessings covenanted to Israel whilst they continued obedient, 1—14. 2d. Multiplied curses denounced against them, if they were disobedient, 15—68.

AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

3 Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

4 Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

5 Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

6 Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day to observe and to do *them*:

14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy

soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, consenting to, confirming, and delighting in, all the words of God's law after the inward man, though he cannot render it a perfect and unfailing obedience. In this evangelical dependence and conscientious walk, true peace and solid joy are to be found. Thus God may be glorified, and mankind benefited; and in promoting this religion, magistrates, ministers, and persons of every rank, should concur; and improve their authority, influence, and example for that purpose.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 2, *All these*, &c.] This chapter has a near resemblance to the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, which was addressed, almost forty years before, to their forefathers at mount Sinai; and the reader is referred to the notes, &c. made upon it. We have here a very copious and affecting exposition of the *blessing* and the *curse* mentioned in the foregoing chapter, in which there are evidently many things prophetical of the events which have befallen the Jewish nation to this day.

V. 3—14.] In a variety of expressions every kind of prosperity, personal, relative, and public; in their property and enjoyments; in their temporal advancement and spiritual privileges, are engaged to the Israelites, whilst they continued obedient; and their succeeding history furnishes full demonstration, that thus it was uniformly with them *as a nation*, whilst they adhered to the worship and service of God; and in great measure *individually*. Their remarkable prosperity in every thing convinced the surrounding nations, that they were immediately protected and assisted by the Lord, whose name they worshipped, and whose people they professed to be; insomuch that they were often afraid to meddle with them.

V. 15. *All these curses shall*, &c.] These terrible curses, which were denounced against the Israelites when disobedient, have, indeed, uniformly *overtaken them*, that is, have followed and pressed upon them in every situation, and in every country, from that day to this, as it must be evident to every person who is in the least acquainted with their history.

thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

16 Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

17 Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

18 Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

19 Cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast forsaken me.

21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew: and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

23 And the heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that *is* under thee *shall be* iron.

24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away.

27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

29 And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore: and no man shall save *thee*.

30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31 Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*.

32 Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail *with* longing for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand.

33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat

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V. 24. *The rain of thy land*, &c.] Instead of the rain in it's appointed seasons, the Lord declared that he would visit the people with such extreme drought, as should render their land dry dust and barren sand. Such was the famine in the days of Ahab. (1 *Kings* xvii. xviii.) Jeremiah also laments one that was very terrible. (*Jer.* xiv.) and it is remarkable that this formerly fertile land is at present noted for its sterility; and is so thinly inhabited, as not to contain an *hundredth* part of its ancient inhabitants, even according to the largest computation!

V. 25. *And shalt be removed*, &c.] This was fulfilled in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivity, but still more signally hath it been fulfilling for above seventeen hundred years, in the present dispersion of the Jews all over the earth.

V. 28. *The Lord shall smite thee*, &c.] In the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans this was in some measure the case: but in that by Titus and the Romans, and in the subsequent conduct of the miserable reliques of the Jews, their infatuation was so evident, that every one who reads of their conduct must be convinced they were given up to *judicial* blindness and madness, or they never could have been so bent upon their own destruction: whilst, by their obstinate resistance to the Roman power without the least prospect of escaping, they ensured their own miseries; by their intestine rage, they became the executioners of the wrath of God upon themselves, almost saved their enemies the trouble of destroying them, and absolutely put it out of their power to preserve them. (34.)

V. 32. *No might in thine hand*, &c.] Neither power to resist the violence done them, nor money to redeem their enslaved offspring.

V. 36.

eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

36 The LORD shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.

38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather *but* little in; for the locust shall consume it.

39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress *them*; but shalt neither drink *of* the wine, nor gather *the grapes*: for the worms shall eat them.

40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thyself* with the oil: for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*.

41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity.

42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

43 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee.

46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*;

48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and

V. 36. *There shalt thou serve other gods*, &c.] Without doubt multitudes of the Israelites who were carried captive by the Assyrians, and of the Jews who were carried to Babylon, were finally incorporated with the nations among whom they lived, and were drawn in and given up to their idolatry: and some think, that the violence frequently done the Jews in Popish countries; in that they are compelled by severe persecutions, to conceal their religion, and to worship the images of saints and angels, was here predicted.

V. 37. *A proverb, and a by-word*, &c.] The name of *a Jew* hath long been a proverbial mark of detestation and contempt, among all the nations whither they have been driven. I do not say, that this hath been or is *equitable*, but it is *fact*: for we had better look to ourselves, than reproach others who are under the divine rebuke, and who are *living*, though *reluctant*, witnesses of the truth of our holy religion, and of God's indignation against those who reject or oppose it.

V. 43, 44.] These verses had an early accomplishment in the time of the judges. The remains of the conquered nations were permitted to rise up against the Israelites, to gain the ascendency over them, and cruelly to oppress them, whenever their sins had provoked the Lord.

V. 46. *For a sign, and for a wonder*, &c.] The miseries by severe persecutions, which the Jews have endured, and which in some measure they still endure, without *apparent* prospect of redress, are unparalleled in the history of mankind, both for their weight, their number, and their duration: yet after all the oppressions and massacres with which they have been wasted, and the long-continued dispersion by which they have been scattered, they still remain a distinct and very numerous people. These events, compared with the favour of God in ancient times manifested towards them, and with the predictions concerning them, should not only excite our astonishment, but turn unto us for a testimony; and, instead of successive miracles, should assure us of the truth of the Scriptures. And when the predictions likewise concerning their conversion to Christ shall be accomplished, the whole taken together will indeed be a sign and a wonder to all the nations of the earth, and become the forerunner of a general spread of true christianity.

V. 49—58.] These verses [illegible] to describe the Romans, the fair and [illegible] enemies of the Jews, who came from a far [illegible] whose standard was an *eagle*; who spake a language of which the Jews were then utter strangers; whose victories were rapid, whose

and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

54 *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children, whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter,

57 And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and towards her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, *that are* written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60 Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

63 And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone.

65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have

whose appearance was terrible, whose yoke was an iron yoke; (48.) and the havock which they made among them was most tremendous. By their arms Jerusalem was besieged, facked, and barbarously defolated; while the siege continued the famine was so extreme, that women ate their own children, and concealed the horrible repast, left others should tear it from them: and after that event, the fame nation, continually provoked by their infurrections and daring crimes, received from Rome fresh fcenes of extirpation. So that [illegible] was [illegible] in the siege, (as [illegible] and the [illegible] were afterwards [illegible] are confidered, [illegible] remains of them [illegible] wonderful: and the Babylonish captivity, which was the punishment of their [illegible] for the misery or captivity [illegible]

sufferings since they rejected and crucified their Messiah; that the superior malignity of that crime, above all which went before it, is legibly written in the punishment of it.

V. 61. *Which is not written*, &c.] After this tremendous catalogue of curses, lest there should be any possible temporal misery which had not been mentioned, the whole is comprised in one general denunciation; that every species, and every degree, of misery should come upon them, if they continued disobedient.

V. 63. *The Lord will rejoice*, &c.] The miseries of his creatures cannot be any ways pleasing in themselves unto the Lord: but he is pleased with the exercise and display of that justice, truth, wisdom, and power which become him as the Judge of all the earth.

V. 65. *No ease*, &c.] It is here predicted that the impenitent Jews should not be allowed any alleviation or [illegible] accordingly they have hitherto found

have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.

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found no country in which they are treated as denizens; all suspect them as enemies, and behave to them as aliens, if they do not harass, oppress, and persecute them.—Nothing seems more fitted to confirm a *sensible but hesitating enquirer* concerning the truth of revelation, than a careful comparison of this chapter, and of the prophecies of the New Testament respecting that nation, with their actual history to the present day. This appears to be capable of affording every thing that any external evidence imaginable can effect: and the demonstration thence deduced, which may be continually re-examined, at leisure and with deliberation, seems more convincing than any miracles, which *are transient*, and can only be reviewed in the testimony by which they are authenticated.

V. 68. *And, &c.*] Many of the Jews rebelliously retired into Egypt after the Babylonish captivity, and there miserably perished (*Jer.* xli, xlii, xliii, xliv.) Multitudes went thither, and settled under the successors of Alexander. But this verse seems especially to point out an event which took place after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus: Numbers of the captives were sent by *Jews* into Egypt, (as well as into other countries,) and sold for slaves, at a vile price and for the meanest offices. For their multitude was so great, that purchasers could not be found for them all at any rate. God had brought them out of Egypt, and had forbidden them to return; and had not their sin incurred his severest vengeance, he would never have permitted them to have been forced thither: but by their iniquities they provoked him to reduce them to as abject a condition, as that, from which he had redeemed them. Mr. Henry closes his comment upon this most awful chapter, with mentioning a wicked man, who was so enraged at the threatenings contained in it, that he tore the leaf out of his Bible: 'But, says this pious author, 'to what purpose is it to deface a copy, whilst the original 'stands upon record in the divine counsels, by which it is 'unalterably determined, that the wages of sin is death, 'whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear?'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In vain doth human language exhaust it's powers in attempting to express the whole meaning of these important terms, THE BLESSING, and THE CURSE OF ALMIGHTY GOD: the import of each is infinite, inexplicable, and incomprehensible. All events are absolutely at his disposal, and all creatures are his servants; and he can make every one of us as happy, or as miserable, as he pleases. If he determine to bless the commodities influence of health, riches, and reputation, he gives [illegible]

ful fields, flourishing families, and peaceful habitations: he advances men above their neighbours, and causes them to triumph over their enemies: he communicates every temporal good, and accompanies them with the ordinances of his house and the graces of his Spirit. He can even connect great honour with deep humility; and give success in every undertaking, comfort in every connection, and abundance of all things, along with a thankful, liberal, and spiritual mind: yea all this is very little, compared with that future, everlasting, and most complete felicity, in the contemplation of which our thoughts, and our language are absolutely swallowed up.—But if he purpose to inflict vengeance, what miseries can his curse bring upon mankind even in this present world! an assemblage of dire diseases, racking pains, pinching poverty, dreary famine, and armies of victorious enemies, exercising every cruelty, connected with galling insult and contempt, are all ready to obey his mandate. With these dreadful calamities, at his word, remorse shall seize the conscience, and anguish, dismay, and despair possess the heart; yea maddening rage, envy, and impotent revenge shall join with disappointed ambition, avarice, and lust, to rend the whole soul one wild tumult of conflicting passions, to obliterate every tender feeling, and to infatuate the devoted wretch, by depriving him of all power to extricate himself, and plunging him still deeper into utter ruin. His own personal misery shall be also augmented by witnessing the anguish and distress of friends, relatives, and children rendered miserable through his crimes: and all this, and much more, may with incumbent and accumulating weight press upon him, for wearisome weeks, and months, and years, without prospect of relief, but from death, the thought of which appals the soul with still deeper horrors. Yet this is but *the beginning of sorrows* to those who are under the curse of God: what will then be the unabating and everlasting misery of that world, where "their worm never dieth, "and the fire is not quenched!" To all this wretchedness is every one exposed, who lives in disobedience to God's commandments: and all this wrath of God is revealed from heaven for our warning, "that we may fear "this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD OUR "GOD."—None shall ever suffer any misery, who hath not deserved it: see any abuse his desserts: but indeed we are all exposed to this awful curse for breaking the law of God. Yet, blessed be his name, we are also by gracious and glorious [illegible] that nothing but obstinate impenitency and unbelief, exposes us to the more intolerable wrath of this misery. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the "law, being made a curse for us:" and having [illegible] which

Contains, 1st. *A rehearsal of the Lord's dealings with Israel, introducing a proposal of the covenant to them,* 1—9. 2d. *An address to the several orders of persons required to consent to it,* 10—17. 3d. *A denunciation of wrath against presumptuous offenders,* 18—28. 4th. *A distinction betwixt things secret and things revealed,* 29.

THESE *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

2 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;

3 The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles:

4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon

which our sins had merited, and which we must otherwise have endured for ever. To them, who believe in him, there is no condemnation; every temporal calamity is converted into a salutary chastisement; and whatever be their proportion of temporal blessings, every thing is given or withheld, as is most conducive to their final and eternal felicity; and even in this present world their comfort and happiness are superior to those of the most prosperous sinner. To this refuge and salvation let sinners flee: in these privileges let believers rejoice, and serve their reconciled God with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all spiritual blessings, with which he hath blessed them: whilst gratitude to the Saviour, meditation on his sufferings, and a consciousness of their own deserts, should reconcile them to every cross and self-denial. But let none call these blessings theirs, who do not endeavour to observe, and do all the commandments of God with uprightness of heart: for even the true believer can enjoy the present comfort of them no further, than he "exercises himself to keep a "conscience void of offence towards God and man." — As all things work together for good, to them who love God; so all things concur in ruining his enemies; and in enslaving those to the vilest of masters, that refuse to obey him, whose service is perfect freedom. Even their prosperity increases their pride and insolence, their table becomes their snare, or the curse of God embitters their blessings; and it will pursue, until it overtake them, and sink them into final destruction.—These wonderful predictions concerning the Israelites, compared with their accomplishment, do irrefragably demonstrate the divine inspiration of the Scriptures: how then should their example warn all that see and hear these things, not to provoke the Lord to anger by disobeying his commands, and defiling his gospel! the weight and tediousness of *temporal sufferings*, should remind every one to seek deliverance from *eternal misery* without delay! and should teach the redeemed of the Lord to value their Saviour, and to recommend him to all around them!—Let all, who love the truth and word of God, remember to pity, and pray for the conversion of the unbelieving Jews: and to beseech the Lord, in behalf of our highly favoured misled offending land, that reformation, and the revival of true religion may preserve us from being bereaved of our abused mercies, and from seeing more miseries, from which we have hitherto been graciously exempted.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] *Ver.* 1. *Beside, &c.*] The covenant ratified with this new generation, (like the law which was given them,) was substantially the same with that before ratified with their fathers at mount Sinai. In this chapter the covenant is proposed, and the consequences of violating it are declared; but the more explicit ratification of it was afterwards made from mount Gerizzim and mount Ebal. (*Notes, &c.* xxvii. *Joshua* iii. 30—35.)

Ver. 4. *Yet the Lord, &c.*] Sinful man never makes a proper use of his senses and faculties, or of the opportunities of instruction given him, without the special grace of God. This utter destitution of a disposition to that which is *spiritually* good, and its concomitant propensity to evil, the effects of our fall in Adam, are the sources of all actual wickedness, and render us the objects of God's holy abhorrence and righteous displeasure. The almighty power of God *could* overcome this indisposition to his service in every man, if he pleased: but his power is under the direction of infinite wisdom, and regulated as most conducive to his glory. This powerful energy of divine grace never can become *due in justice* to any man; nay, every man might *righteously* have been left under the dominion of his *sinful propensities*, which are never allowed to be pleaded as an excuse for *sinful actions*. And so far from meriting such a gracious communication from their offended Creator, men in general perceive no occasion for it, have no desire after it, and will use no means to obtain it. But though men can do nothing, either *meritoriously* or *efficaciously*, towards participating such a blessing, their voluntary and daring wickedness, by which they do violence even to their natural conscience and the common sense of mankind, may, and frequently does, provoke God *judicially* to withhold this gift, (*Notes, &c. Isaiah* vi. 9, 10. *Matt.* xiii. 13—15. *John* xii. 38—40. xv. 22. *Acts* xiii. 40, 41. 45, 46.) On the other hand, he hath appointed ministers to use certain means, by which men are from time to time made sensible that such a change is needful, and they then begin to desire it and enquire after it. He hath also appointed means in which such as feel their need of this blessing, and desire it, are commanded and encouraged to seek it. By this appointment the duty of both ministers and people becomes plain: they who attend to these things will receive this blessing from the

God

upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I *am* the LORD your God.

7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them.

8 And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh.

9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

10 Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, *with* all the men of Israel,

11 Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that *is* in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water:

12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day:

13 That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and *that* he may be unto

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God of salvation: and others must be left to the righteous judgment of God; who claims the honour of every good and perfect gift, but will at last convince all his enemies that they alone were to blame for their sins. The minister must seek from God the blessing upon his labours; and must be thankful to him when any receive "eyes to see, and hearts to perceive:" but whilst so many remain blinded to their true state, interest, and duty, the zealous servant of God will wait with earnest expectation for a more extensive blessing, and will seem to think nothing done as so much remains undone. This appears to have been the *feeling* of Moses at this time: though there were doubtless many exceptions, yet the bulk of the people still remained insensible, or not duly sensible, of the import and tendency of all that the Lord had spoken to them, or done for them; and multitudes had provoked him to give them up to their own hearts' lusts. On this account he grieved, (*Note*, *Rom.* ix. 1—3,) and spake this language both by way of reproach of their hardness of heart, and inattention to the means of grace afforded them; and in order to warn and quicken them, and direct them to expect and seek that blessing, which they had not sought for, and God had not given. For if God had not given them it, the inference was undeniable, that they had wilfully hardened their hearts, and stupified their consciences against every thing that they had seen and heard.

V. 5, 6.] (*Note* viii. 4.) By the especial blessing of God upon the manna, which the Israelites despised as light bread, that vast multitude had been preserved as healthy and as fit for their various exercises, as any other people upon the productions of the corn-field and vineyard.

V. 11. *Your little ones*, &c.] The national covenant, made with Israel, not only typified the covenant of grace made with true believers; but also represented the *outward dispensation of the gospel*. The covenant is made with true Christians "for the good of them and of their children "after them," (*Jer.* xxxii. 39. *Acts*, ii. 39.) In their families, and in collective bodies composed of them, the outward dispensation of the gospel is especially continued, unless those families cast off their profession, or evince a total disregard to it: in this case it is frequently removed from them and given to others, and thus it passes from nation to nation, and descends from generation to generation. The infant-offspring therefore, of those persons who are favoured with and value this outward dispensation of the gospel, are greatly interested in such transactions, though not conscious of it; even as these little ones of the Israelites were in their covenant: and they who value the blessings of the new covenant as their own portion, and desire them as the portion of their beloved children, and intend to bring them up as the children of the covenant, seem equally authorized and required to act in their behalf, and to bring them under the external obligations, and to seek the external pledges of it for them, as these Israelitish parents were: for we argue very inconclusively, if we infer, that because means do not *uniformly* communicate grace, they are therefore of no use. This transaction might many ways, at the time, and afterwards, benefit both the parents and their offspring, though we can scarcely suppose, that it was a converting ordinance to these infants: but it might stir up the parents to pray for them, and to instruct them as they grew up; and when they came to years of understanding, and were reminded how solemnly they, as well as their parents, had entered into covenant with God, it might operate as a restraint upon their lusts, a check upon their consciences, and an incentive to them personally to seek the blessings thus covenanted to them, and which could only be forfeited by their own wilful sin. The same may be pleaded by those, who deem infant-baptism a divine ordinance, as one reason of their practice: whilst those conscientious persons, who judge otherwise, have a right to be treated with the utmost candour; and reciprocal moderation upon a subject, respecting which so many sensible, pious, and learned men, entertain contrary sentiments, and practise accordingly, can never be unseasonably inculcated.

V. 13. *As he hath sworn*, &c.] The oath which the Lord sware unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is here adduced as the security of the covenant made with the nation of Israel; and Paul quotes it as a security to all who "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope "set before them" in the gospel, (*Heb.* vi. 13. 18;) for by it both temporal blessings, and the means of grace, were secured to the posterity of the patriarchs according to

unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath;

15 But with *him* that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with *him* that *is* not here with us *this* day:

16 (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye passed by;

17 And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them:)

18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst.

20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses *that are* written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant *that are* written in this book of the law:

22 So that the generation to come of your children, that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses, which the LORD hath laid upon it;

23 *And that* the whole land thereof *is* brimstone, and salt, *and* burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger?

25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their

to the flesh; and the especial blessings, which Abraham personally was interested in by the righteousness of faith, to all his spiritual seed of true believers, who are sealed with the true circumcision of the heart. (*Notes*, *Gen.* xvii.) The strangers and slaves (11,) were also allowed to enter into this covenant, and were not excluded except they excluded themselves. Those who were absent, and their children yet unborn to the latest posterity, were in some sense included: as nothing but apostacy, idolatry, or rejection of their promised Saviour, could cut off the entail of these *national* blessings; and nothing but personal unbelief and disobedience could prevent their personally sharing in the special blessings, which were bestowed on their believing progenitors.

V. 18. *Lest*, &c.] This and the following verses looked back to the curses of the foregoing chapter, and taught the people to dread the infliction of them upon individuals, as well as upon the nation at large, if they infringed the covenant now proposed to them: for as that covenant engaged to them blessings above other nations, if they availed themselves of their advantages; so would their guilt be more aggravated, and their distress more accumulated, than those of other nations, if they were rebellious. Idolatry, in an Israelite, must be preceded by willful apostacy and contempt of the covenant of God: it was in explicit renunciation of the covenant of grace, and of the God of Israel. The same things hold true in the case of those who have been baptized and brought up under the dispensation of the gospel; they more explicitly renounce God, and refuse the blessings of his covenant, if they turn aside to wickedness, than any other person can do.

A root that beareth, &c.] The word translated *gall*, may mean *hemlock*, or some other poisonous plant. The enmity of man's heart against God is that root which bears poisonous and bitter fruit, such as apostacy, idolatry, infidelity, profaneness, hypocrisy, and wickedness. Every such person in a religious society is also a root, which produces more and more of such pestiferous plants, by his persuasions, influence, and example, (*Notes*, &c. *Heb.* xii. 15, 16.)

V. 19, *He blesses*, &c.] Unbelief produces presumptuous expectations of impunity in sin, in direct contempt of God's word; and this is frequently the effect of a false and unscriptural religion, by which a vain confidence is generated, and the sinner's heart is the more emboldened in wickedness. (*Jer.* vii. 3—11. xliv. 15—27.)

To add drunkenness, &c.] This is a metaphorical expression, denoting the eager gratification of depraved inclinations. While sinners walk in the imagination of their own hearts, they greedily drink down iniquity, as the drunkard doth his liquor, without regard to consequences. It may also refer to the sensual excesses, which were employed as incentives to the worship of idols, and which tended greatly to promote idolatry. More terrible words can scarcely be conceived, than those which follow: and as they respected the people of Israel, their accomplish-

their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.

26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them:

27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses *that are* written in this book:

28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.

29 The secret *things belong* unto the LORD

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ment hath been as remarkable. (*Note*, Jer. xxviii.) But they concern sinners of every nation, especially those who are favoured with the light of the gospel: they however require the reader's attentive consideration, and application to himself, as matter of serious enquiry, whether he be exposed to, or delivered from the danger of sinking under such aweful denunciations; rather than the commentator's skill or labour to expound them.

V. 26. *Whom, &c.*] The Lord gave no command nor sanction to Israel's worship of idols; but did every thing proper, in the most decided manner to set them against such a degrading abomination. The very heathen are here represented, both as noting the surprising miseries of the Jewish nation, and discerning the true cause of them. Doubtless this hath been verified in thousands of instances. (*Jer.* xl. 2, 3.)

V. 29. *The, &c.*] It is here intimated, that many things in the divine counsels and conduct would appear very dark and difficult to the Israelites. They would be ready to start enquiries about those future events, which were hinted to them in so general a manner; and to raise objections concerning the dispensations of God towards them. The aweful curses might appear to some of them needlessly severe, and they would want to know the reasons of them farther than it pleased God to reveal them. Of this disposition satan would avail himself, and pour in his temptations to unbelief; to hard thoughts of God, of his law and service; to exculpate themselves by throwing the blame elsewhere; or to amuse themselves with barren speculations, instead of attending to their duty. This is here obviated by a rule of easy and universal application. That which God hath not revealed, man should not enquire about; for who can penetrate into the secrets of his wisdom? his decrees and counsels, and the reasons of his conduct, and the mysteries of his nature, we cannot discover, except as he informs us of them; and it is the height of insolence and presumption to attempt it. (*Rom.* xi. 33—36.) Such enquiries were therefore prohibited; secret things belong to God. But he hath revealed every thing that can be truly beneficial; to his revealed truth and will man's enquiries in divine things should be confined; they should reach to the whole, and terminate with them. These *belong to us*; not to increase our stock of barren notions, but to direct, encourage, and regulate our obedience, "that we may do all the words of this law." They *belong* also to our children, and to them we should communicate the instruction which God hath afforded us.—Almost all the heresies and controversies, which have corrupted the purity, or disturbed the peace, of the church in every age; which have taken Christians off from their duty, and exposed them to the triumphant scorn of their enemies for their animosities and absurdities, have originated from disregard to the distinction established in this verse; from vain attempts, by human reasonings and authority, to fill up some supposed chasms in revelation, and to make it more apparently consistent and systematical, than it hath pleased God to make it; and deducing disputable consequences from revelation, or tracing back it's sacred mysteries to some unrevealed antecedent causes. But the *silence* is as instructive as the *language* of Scripture: it's truths must be apprehended by humble faith; and they disdain to be comprehended or modelled by our pround reason. They are intended to subserve practice; not to gratify curiosity, furnish materials of speculation, or foment angry controversies. These are satan's comments on them, which God abhors as much as avowed infidelity. To know the perfections of God, and our obligations to love and serve him; to know our relations to him, and to the eternal world; to know our state and character as sinners, and our duty as under a dispensation of mercy; to know the way of acceptance, and the source of grace and comfort in Jesus Christ; to know our duty as redeemed sinners, with respect to our several stations, endowments, and relations in life, with the motives, encouragements, and assistances to perform it, which revelation proposes; together with the enemies and dangers to which we are exposed, and the means of escape, and the consequences of our conduct: this forms the substance of divine knowledge, and when reduced to practice it constitutes heavenly wisdom. This the Bible plainly reveals, further than this man cannot profitably go: by this light he may live and die comfortable, and be happy eternally; after having on earth glorified God, served his generation, and left his dying exhortations and blessings as a bequest to his posterity: all else is but an *ignis fatuus*, which bewilders the benighted traveller; and whilst it amuses him with it's glimmering, misleads him into, and leaves him to sink in, the pit of destruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who have been enabled to consent to the Lord's new covenant of mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, and to give up themselves to be his people, should embrace every opportunity of making and renewing their open profession of these their relations and obligations to the God of salvation, and of giving bond, as it were, to the world, to the church, and to their own consciences, for walking consistently. And it is pleasant to behold numbers of the rising generation, stepping forward to consent to the same covenant, to seek the same blessings, and acknowledge the same obligations, and purpose by divine grace, of walking by the same rule, and minding the same things. In order to this desirable effect being produced, the nature, security, and blessings of the covenant ought to be laid before and proposed to the people at large: they should be exhorted, and invited with all earnestness to accede to them: the encouragements of the word of God should be pointed out; and the aweful consequences of neglecting so great salvation declared

Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children

clared to them, with the greatest solemnity, the most pressing expostulations, and the most affectionate warnings. In these things all persons are alike concerned, kings and princes, captains and senators, rich and poor, even down to the meanest slave; nay, blessed be God, not only we strangers of the Gentiles, but the most abandoned sinners are invited, and should be even *compelled to come in*, and to participate the gospel feast, as far as energetic arguments and earnest persuasions can compel them. And even infants, though yet unconscious both of their wants, duties, and privileges, are concerned in these matters as much as others, and ought to be brought to, and brought up for, the Lord, as the children of the covenant, and the seed of the church. But though we are all under the outward dispensation, and means are to be used by every man with his neighbour, (*Micah*, iv. 2. *Zech.* viii. 20;) yet God alone can give men an heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear, for good and saving purposes. From him therefore must we seek the blessing, and to him give the praise when this desirable effect is produced: and when men become sensible of their state, danger, and wants, these intimations inform them whither to go for relief, and to whom they are to make application.—Whilst the true Christian, or the zealous minister, mourns that so few have received these blessings, in comparison of the multitudes who are blinded by the god of this world; the consideration should add fervency to his prayers for others, and to his grateful praises on his own account.—Every mercy which we receive should bind us more strictly to cheerful obedience; and every truth of God's word, if properly received, will have a practical effect upon us: nor can we expect to prosper, in the best sense, "unless we keep and "do the words of God's covenant." But the covenant made with Christians is established upon better promises than that with the nation of Israel; and not only confirms it's blessings conditionally to the obedient, with the interposition of the *oath* as well as *promise* of God; but also assures the *true believer* of that communication of grace, which shall infallibly preserve him from finally forfeiting it's blessings by apostacy or unrepented sin. (*Jer.* xxxi. 31—34, xxxii. 38—41;) yet many suppose, that they are interested in the blessings and security of this covenant, in whose hearts the law of God hath not been written, and to whom it proves an encouragement to sin. These are they, who draw back unto perdition; and their apostacy, or shameful wickedness, brings disgrace upon the gospel, and ruin upon themselves. The lusts of their hearts were never mortified by the power of converting grace, and therefore when occasion offers, they spring up into practices, as poisonous and as bitter, as the hemlock and the wormwood; and by them many are defiled, or hardened in prejudice, unbelief, and ungodliness; or bolstered up in vain confidence and presumption: and thus the direful evil eats as doth a canker, pervades great multitudes, and corrodes whole churches. Therefore the minister and Christian should watch against, and crush it's first feeble beginnings.—But however the curse of God may be disbelieved and despised, its accumulated effects will fearfully convince the most daring, of their folly and madness, without distinction of rank or sex, and without regard to multitudes, that "it is a

for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

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"fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And though the heart of man will at present rise in rage and enmity against the terrible threatenings of God's word; the period is approaching, when not only spectators, but the criminals themselves, whilst enduring their direful accomplishment, shall be constrained to admit the justice of the sentence of their condemnation.—But satan especially endeavours to persuade men to expect impunity in sin; and they are prone to flatter themselves, they love to be flattered by others, and find enough to flatter them, that they shall have peace, though they walk after the imagination of their hearts, and gratify their favourite lusts. They will persuade themselves, and find others concur with them in determining, that *they* need not be so strict, and that God will not be so severe as vulgar readers of the Bible may imagine: and so, by some ingenious sophistication, they evaporate the force of the scriptural declarations, till they fall fast asleep in the jaws of destruction. And should some faithful minister, out of love to their souls, address them in scriptural language, concerning the curse of God, and the wrath to come; he would be repaid with liberal reproaches, and branded as a bigot, an uncharitable wretch, a man of vulgar and narrow mind, if not as an enthusiast and a madman! The Lord will not spare such presumers, who treat his truth as a lie, blaspheme his justice as if it were cruelty, and set his awful vengeance at defiance: against such persons his anger and jealousy will smoke, and all the curses that are written in this book will rest upon them, their names shall be blotted out from under heaven, and they shall be separated unto evil far off from the tribes of the redeemed; where too late conviction shall be accompanied with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, in anguish and despair. But these things are not written in the book of God; nor are these observations made upon them, God is witness, in order that this misery should be endured by those who are thus addressed; but that all, who hear and read, may take warning and flee from the wrath to come; that they may profit by the judgments of God upon others; that they may flee for refuge to the hope of the gospel; that they may fear coming short of the grace of God; that they may refuse their sinful inclinations every indulgence, and watch against the beginnings of evil, and the inroads of negligence; and above all that they may shudder at the thought of venturing upon sin by any abuse of the grace of the gospel.—Many, who themselves are ungodly, can readily enough perceive the steps by which others descend to destruction, and will acknowledge the justice of *their* punishment, though they are blind to, or cavil at, the sentence of condemnation which hangs over themselves! But let every one of us look to our own case: let us avoid sloth, and dissipation; let us not shun reflection, or stifle convictions; but let us not amuse ourselves with empty speculations, or encourage ourselves by bold conjectures, or imagine objections to the truths and ways of God; let us not cautiously pry into unrevealed things; but thankfully use revelations, as the lantern of our paths, by which to [illegible] happy road through this dark and dangerous [illegible] we may walk in it ourselves, and point it out to our children also.—In that world *above*, whither

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CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1st. Prophetical promises to Israel in the latter days, 1—10. 2d. A declaration of the nearness and plainness of those things which were enjoined them, 11—14. 3d. Life and death solemnly set before them, 15—20.

AND it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee:

2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

4 If *any* of thine be driven out unto the utmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day.

9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes *which are* written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

11 For this commandment which I command

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this light will guide the humble and obedient believer, even things which are now secret will be discovered, all darkness and difficulties will vanish; perfect light will shine upon all the counsels and judgments of God; and the whole will terminate in universal and everlasting approbation, admiration, gratitude, praise, and felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1—10.] This passage evidently refers to the prophetical denunciations of the two preceding chapters, which have had their main accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and in the consequent dispersion of the Jews to the present day: no doubt can therefore remain, but the prophetical promises contained in these verses are yet unaccomplished. The reliques of the Jewish nation shall, in some future and not very distant period, be converted to the faith of Christ; and probably be gathered from their present dispersed state, and reinstated in the land of Canaan. The language of these promises is in great measure *absolute*; not containing a *mere conditional encouragement*, but predicting an event which would assuredly take place; for the Lord himself engaged "to circumcise the hearts" of the people; and when *regenerating* grace hath removed the obstacles of corrupt nature, and divine love hath supplanted the love of sin, they certainly will be fixed, and

repent, and return to God, and obey him: and he will rejoice over them to do them good. Yet the successive steps are described in which the prophecy will be accomplished, that at the appointed season they may be directed in what method to seek for the promised blessings; and that sinners of all ages and nations might thence receive instruction concerning the nature of true repentance and of real religion. (*Notes, Jer.* xxxi. 31—34. xxxii. 39—41. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—27.)

V. 11—14.] In these verses Moses spake concerning the *commandment*, and Paul long after applied his words to the *method of a sinner's justification by faith in Jesus Christ*, (*Note*, &c. *Rom* x. 6—9.) This has occasioned some perplexity to expositors; but there doth not appear to be much cause for it. The covenant, proposed to Israel in the *form of commandments*, did not consist of *the moral law alone*, obedience to which especially constitutes *the righteousness of works*; but of the ceremonial law also, in which Christ was signified, "as the end of "the law unto righteousness to every one that believ-"eth:" and though a vast proportion of the Israelites mistook the nature of these institutions, (as multitudes of professed Christians utterly misunderstand the sacraments of the New Testament;) yet in the legal ordinances was mainly contained their dispensation of the gospel. All that covenant was ratified with the nation of Israel: it was a type of the covenant of grace made with believers:

mand thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan, to go to possess it.

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live;

20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; (for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days:) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

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believers: the individuals among them, who were truly religious, were justified by the same righteousness, and in the same way, that true Christians are; and justifying faith, working by love, invariably produces obedience to the commandments of God under every dispensation. There never was, since the fall of man, more than one way to heaven; and this is marked out in both Testaments, though not with equal clearness and precision. When God circumcises the heart, repentance of sin, faith, and dependence on the appointed Saviour, with love and obedience, are produced. The sinner passes from death to life, receives forgiveness and the gift of righteousness by faith, becomes a new creature, and, by the grace of God, walks through this world to glory in the highway of holiness. The words of Moses assuredly had some respect to that same way of acceptance which Paul more explicitly described; and Paul's words implied the same conscientious obedience of which Moses more fully treated. And they both mean, that the word of God brings near unto us, and plainly reveals, the good and right way; that we need not travel for instruction, as ancient philosophers did, nor seek information from men at immense labour and expence: nor need we anxiously or curiously desire to be wise above what is written. For the word of God, and the preached gospel, will suffice for every useful purpose, if we make ourselves acquainted with them, if we believe, profess, and love them, and if we treasure them up in our hearts in order to reduce them to practice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the word of God all things belonging to our eternal peace are brought nigh unto us; and the information there contained forces itself upon our attention, our judgment, our consciences, and our affections, by every endearing motive, warning, encouragement, or consideration which can conduce to [illegible]

in vain doth a kind Providence vouchsafe us this invaluable light; in vain do ministers endeavour to convey the instructions of heavenly wisdom home to the heart and conscience, in the most convincing and efficacious manner; if men will thrust them away from themselves through unbelief and the love of sin: nor will hearing, remembering, understanding, professing, or disputing about, the truths and precepts of God's word avail us, if they do not sink into our hearts, and influence our conduct. But when the blessings of eternal salvation are thus fully proposed unto us, and the acceptance or refusal of them are so fairly referred to our choice, nothing can prevent our felicity, but the wickedness of our own proud and carnal hearts. And they who refuse the freely offered grace, eventually choose and love death and perdition, being cruel to their own souls, (*Prov.* viii. 36.)—The ministers of Christ ought plainly to declare to sinners of every description, that, except they repent, they will surely perish; as well as to set before them, in the most solemn and affecting manner, "life and death, the blessing and the curse;" that if they cannot prevent their destruction, they may deliver their own souls, (*Notes*, &c. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 7—9.) And in this case, not only will the faithful minister at last become a witness against them, but heaven and earth will bear record, that they deserve their doom, and have none to blame but themselves. But are *we* sensible of the reality and importance of the things thus proposed unto us? Would we "*choose* that good part which shall never be "taken from us?" Let us beg of God to circumcise our hearts, to subdue our lusts, and to implant his love: then shall we be prepared for serious reflection, for godly sorrow, and true repentance; then shall we value his before neglected salvation, and hoping in his mercy, shall return unto him, as our Portion and Felicity, shall worship and obey him as the Lord our God, and cleave unto him as our Leader and our Lawgiver. Then will every ordinance and

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. Moses encouraging Israel and Joshua concerning the conquest of Canaan, and commanding the public reading of the law every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles, 1—13. *2d. The Lord predicting the future apostacy of Israel, and giving orders for the composing of a sacred song relative to that event,* 14—21. *3d. Moses writing the song, giving a charge to Joshua, delivering the book of the law to the priests, and commanding them to call together the people to hear the words of the song; and intermixing the whole with cutting reproofs and solemn warnings,* 22—30.

AND Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

2 And he said unto them, I *am* an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, *and* he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: *and* Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

4 And the LORD shall do unto them, as he did unto Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and to the land of them whom he destroyed.

5 And the Lord shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.

6 Be strong, and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong, and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

8 And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee: he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,

11 When all Israel is come to appear before

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and every act of obedience be pleasant; love and gratitude will enlarge our hearts; and justice, temperance, truth, and kindness will mark our paths; every good gift will be communicated from a reconciled God; every enemy will by degrees be brought under, and at length destroyed; and a blessing will be reserved for our posterity when we are gone to glory. And should the only wise God see good to withhold temporal benefits, and command affliction as our lot, he will support and comfort us, and the whole will have a salutary and happy event. In the mean time, tender compassion and expanded benevolence will dictate fervent prayers for our fellow sinners on every side, and excite assiduous endeavours to communicate the same blessings to them likewise: while the twofold hope of the triumphs of true religion upon earth over all opposition; and of the complete and speedy deliverance of our own souls from sin and all its consequences, will gild our most gloomy prospects and chear our darkest hours.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *I can no more*, &c.] The age to which Moses had arrived, as well as the declaration of the Lord, reminded him of his approaching death; though he had not experienced any decay of nature; (xxxiv. 7;)—In the former chapters he seems to have preached his concluding discourse to the people: but he had a variety of other methods to use, to impress their minds more forcibly and durably.

V. 9. *Wrote this law*, &c.] Some understand this expression of the book of Deuteronomy alone: but it seems more reasonable to suppose that the whole law was thus delivered unto the priests and elders; a copy perhaps to each of them, besides one to be deposited by the ark in the holy of holies; (26.) Doubtless there were several other copies of the books of Moses; but in that infancy both of writing and reading, it cannot be supposed that they were very much multiplied.

V. 10—13.] The duty of individuals, and that of the heads of families had before been specified; as they were all commanded by every means in their power to become acquainted themselves, and to make their children acquainted, with the truths and precepts which had been delivered to them; (*Notes*, &c. vi. 7—9. xi. 18—20.)—Whoever has read, in the history of the reformation in England, an account of the pains and devices employed by many persons to get scraps of the English translations of the Scriptures, when a whole copy could neither be obtained nor safely possessed, will see the cause which we have to be thankful for the multitudes of copies of the Bible, that are among us; and will understand the very different situation in which the Israelites were placed for many ages, and in some degree even to the coming of Christ. Nor were copies of the Bible ever so common and

fore the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

12 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law;

13 And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

14 And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go *to be* amongst them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befal them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God *is* not amongst us?

18 And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

19 Now

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and cheap, before the art of printing was brought to some degree of perfection, as to enable poor people in general to possess them; which is an invaluable advantage towards the propagation of religious knowledge, though not being properly improved, it is far from having produced proportionably good effects.—To supply this deficiency, the means, prescribed in the texts above referred to, would be very useful. But in large bodies of people, the majority have always hitherto neglected even those means which they had in their power; and the appointment mentioned in these verses would, when observed, greatly tend to preserve in the minds of the people at large some general knowledge of the law, and to excite them to the study of it; and especially to bring the successive generations acquainted with it: and as God is not limited, but can bless feeble means to great usefulness, when they are of his own appointment and further advantages are not attainable; it is probable, that many were brought to fear the Lord and serve him by this ordinance.—At the period before alluded to, as soon as a copy of the English Bible was placed in every church, the avidity with which the people flocked to read the Scriptures, or hear them read, and the extensive usefulness of this measure, can hardly be conceived in these days of apathy and negligence. But the word of God was then precious, because scarce; (1 *Sam.* iii. 1;) It is grievous, that the plenty, with which we are favoured, should create indifference!—Every sabbatical year at the feast of tabernacles this public reading of the Scriptures was appointed, and all persons were required to attend. Doubtless it was not merely confined to one person, or place; but numbers were engaged in different situations, so that every one might have an opportunity of hearing, who was disposed so to do: and the Jewish tradition is, that the king, judge, or high priest was the chief reader, in the

court of the tabernacle or temple. In later ages the Scriptures were read every sabbath-day *at least* in the synagogues all over the land; which had a vast effect in preventing idolatry after the Babylonish captivity.—The public reading of the Scriptures in worshipping assemblies is an honour, which should in all places be shewn them: it is likewise equivalent to the minister's producing his commission and instructions; it is the touchstone and warrant of his doctrine; and an important means of bringing the generality of the people acquainted with *other parts* of the word of God, besides those short texts or mottos which it is become customary to select as the subject of our public discourses: and there is every reason to believe, that the reading of the Scriptures, in all the parish churches in this kingdom, proves the means of salvation to many souls, who are left miserably destitute of other instruction. It were however to be wished, that the several clergymen employed in this service were more mindful to read the appointed portions of God's word, *audibly*, *distinctly*, and *deliberately*: this would give probable ground to expect much more extensively beneficial effects to result from this laudable institution.

V. 18. *I will* &c.] When God withholds his *gracious influences*, man's evil inclinations naturally lead him into sin; and when he withholds his *providential protection and blessing*, (which is implied by the figurative expression of *hiding his face*,) man necessarily sinks into misery. Our dependence on him is in every respect absolute; and it is proper we should know it, that we may fear to provoke him and seek to please him, that we may put our trust in him and give all the praise to him. From him we must expect preservation from sin, and exemption from misery, with the communication of knowledge, purity, and felicity: but we should shudder at the blasphemy of

19 Now therefore write ye this ſong for you, and teach it the children of Iſrael: put it in their mouths, that this ſong may be a witneſs for me againſt the children of Iſrael.

20 For when I ſhall have brought them into the land which I ſware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they ſhall have eaten and filled themſelves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and ſerve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

21 And it ſhall come to paſs, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this ſong ſhall teſtify againſt them as a witneſs; for it ſhall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their ſeed: for I know their imagination which they go about even now, before I have brought them into the land which I ſware.

22 Moſes therefore wrote this ſong the ſame day, and taught it the children of Iſrael.

23 And he gave Joſhua the ſon of Nun a charge, and ſaid, Be ſtrong, and of a good courage: for thou ſhalt bring the children of Iſrael into the land which I ſware unto them; and I will be with thee.

24 And it came to paſs, when Moſes had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finiſhed,

25 That Moſes commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, ſaying,

26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the ſide of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witneſs againſt thee.

27 For

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of charging our evil to his account, from whoſe unchangeable perfection *good*, and only *good*, can flow.

V. 19. *Write ye* &c.] There is ſomewhat in poetry, when well compoſed, and upon an intereſting ſubject, that is exceedingly attractive to the mind, as well as eaſily fixed and retained in the memory: and it is noted of almoſt every nation in the earlier ſtages of civilization or literature, that hardly any compoſitions attract general notice except ſuch as are poetical; but that theſe are ſought after, learned, recited, or ſung, with a ſort of enthuſiaſtic eagerneſs and ecſtacy.—To this propenſity of the human mind the Lord was pleaſed to adapt his inſtructions: a ſacred ſong, fraught with hiſtory, prophecy, promiſe, and warning, and containing the ſubſtance of the preceding addreſſes, was compoſed by Moſes, doubtleſs by divine inſpiration; (with whom it ſeems Joſhua, as his co-adjutor and ſucceſſor, was conjoined;) which the people would learn themſelves, and teach their children, from generation to generation; and would have frequently in their memories and mouths, when the other parts of the law were generally neglected: and indeed God himſelf engaged that it ſhould not be forgotten, which hath already been wonderfully verified during more than 3000 years.—This ſong in after ages, when the predictions contained in it had received their accompliſhment, would vouch the divine inſpiration of it's penman; would ſhew the Iſraelites the *author*, and the *cauſe* of their miſeries, and teſtify for the juſtice of God, and againſt their wickedneſs; and form a powerful call to them, to repent and return to God, as the only method in which they could be extricated from their ſufferings.

V. 21. *I know*, &c.] God knows what is in man, and whither his own inclinations will lead him if left to himſelf: and his reſtraining influences, as well as his ſanctifying grace, are communicated or withheld, according to the unfathomable counſels of his infinite wiſdom; but always conſiſtently with his juſtice, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs, and with the propoſals of them in the goſpel to all who ſeek for them. Nor doth the foreknowledge of God, or thoſe deep decrees which are connected with it, either occaſion, or excuſe, man's wickedneſs; or abate the Lord's anger, or diminiſh the puniſhment which ſinners will *juſtly* ſuffer.

V. 23 *And* &c.] (*Note*, *Numb.* xxvii. 19.)

V. 26. *In the*, &c.] This appears to have been a correct and authentic copy of the whole books of Moſes, probably written with his own hand, which would be reſerved, that in caſe of errors, diſputes, or defect of other copies, it might be referred to; and it would be a witneſs againſt the ſins of the people whenever it was found or examined. (*Note*, 1 *Kings*, xxii. 8—11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is very profitable for us to conſider how our life paſſes, and how much of our day is ſpent, in proportion to the progreſs which hath been made in the work allotted us: that we may be the more earneſt in making ready for our cloſing ſcene, and our final account, and in rendering our remaining ſervices to the church and to the world. Even when old age is healthy and vigorous, it ſhould be remembered that the limits of human life are fixed, by him who hath denounced the ſentence of death againſt us. Nor need thoſe, who are made partakers of the grace of God, deſire to live in this world; for the longer they continue here, the more miſery they muſt feel, and the more wickedneſs they muſt witneſs, even where the ſight of it gives peculiar pain: and when our weariſome journey is ended, and our glorious victory completed, God will raiſe up other inſtruments, by which to carry on his great deſigns; and will himſelf be the ever-living guardian of thoſe about whom we are moſt affectionately anxious. We have only to do our day's work; and, if able, to be doubly active when the ſhadows of the evening approach; that with all our influence and zeal we may endeavour to make an awakening or encouraging impreſſion upon our ſurvivors, confirming our living proſelytes with our dying teſtimony.—Satan always aims to ſanctify ſtanding ſin, and to ſeparate them from the ſociety of God's people, and to ſhut themſelves and each other to obedience, and awe our minds from wickedneſs;

27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy ſtiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day ye have been rebellious againſt the LORD; and how much more after my death?

28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may ſpeak theſe words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record againſt them.

29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *yourſelves*, and turn aſide from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days, becauſe ye will do evil in the ſight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

30 And Moſes ſpake in the ears of all the congregation of Iſrael the words of this ſong, until they were ended.

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1ſt. The aforementioned ſong, contraſting the character of God with that of Iſrael; and his conduct towards them with their's towards him; together with predictions of their future crimes, miſeries, and final deliverance, v. 1—43. 2d. The delivery of the ſong to the elders of Iſrael, v. 44—47. 3d. Moſes commanded to prepare for his approaching death, v. 44—52.

GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will ſpeak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

2 My doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my

neſs, by applying to our hopes and fears, the promiſes, and denunciations of God's word. But the heart of man is ſo careleſs, and inſenſible, that every method ſhould be tried, and all will be found too little, to keep up any proper acquaintance with, or attention to the truths, precepts, and worſhip of God amongſt them: every opportunity muſt be embraced, and every avenue to the heart ſeized, to intrude ſome uſeful conviction, and to ſtir up the remembrance of ſome forgotten doctrine, or neglected duty. Nay the beſt of men need repeated encouragements and charges to engage them ſteadily in the work of God, eſpecially in arduous, and perilous ſervices, in this evil world. But the Lord will never fail, nor forſake ſuch, as truſt in, and are employed by him: they may therefore be ſtrong, and of a good courage, however numerous, malicious, or potent their enemies are; for in ſuch a cauſe, and with ſuch a helper, they ſhall certainly triumph over all oppoſition; until every promiſe in the book of God has had it's accompliſhment unto them: and every former mercy to the church, or to themſelves, warrants the aſſurance of future ſucceſſes, and they are encompaſſed with a cloud of witneſſes, who unitedly teſtify the atchievements of faith. To the prieſts, the Lord's miniſters is the written word of God eſpecially committed, to be by them preſerved, and delivered uncorrupted unto the people; and men, women, children, and ſtrangers are to be diligently inſtructed from it, that they may learn to fear, and ſerve God in the obedience of faith. Every ordinance of God, every copy of the Scriptures, every faithful ſermon, every pious book, every pſalm or hymn, which is printed, read, repeated, or ſung, nay the very words of man's own mouths will riſe up in judgment, and bear witneſs for God againſt ſinners, who notwithſtanding all forſake him, and commit iniquity. To God's holy abhorrence of ſin we muſt aſcribe all the miſeries, which are endured on earth, as well as the torments, which are reſerved for the wicked in hell: and we are in a way to reap benefit from, and obtain deliverance out of our troubles, when we conſider them in this light, and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs therein. Alas, that the liberality of the Lord ſhould occaſion increaſing ungodlineſs amongſt men; and that proſperity ſhould generate ingratitude! hence it becomes neceſſary for the Lord to correct thoſe moſt, whom he loves beſt: and hence we have all need to fear proſperity more than the ſevereſt affliction, and to be doubly watchful, and inſtant in prayer under the ſmiles of Providence. The more accurately, wiſe and holy men have ſtudied, and the longer they have obſerved human nature, comparing ſuch obſervations with the word of God, the more they have perceived and lamented it's proneneſs to rebellion: and when the moſt powerful reſtraints fail to deter men from ſin, with what impetuoſity will they ruſh into it, when they are left to follow their own inclinations! But if we grieve to ſee the preſent prevalence of wickedneſs, and entertain gloomy apprehenſions of yet increaſing ungodlineſs; let us remember that thus it was with Moſes, with the apoſtles, and with moſt of thoſe, who have ſerved God, and their generation: and having uſed our influence, and poured out our prayers to prevent it, as much as we can, let us leave the matter with him, who will maintain his own cauſe, and who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1. *O ye heavens*, &c.] The prophet in this abrupt, and highly poetical exordium, addreſſes the heavens and the earth, and demands their attention to his ſublime, and important ſubject. Some ſuppoſe that the heavens are addreſſed as producing by the influences of the ſun and rain, and the revolutions of the ſeaſons, that fertility, which Iſrael would ungratefully abuſe: and the earth as yielding them it's increaſe; and that they are called upon by an animated figure, as if living perſons to bear teſtimony for God, and againſt Iſrael. But perhaps all the inhabitants of heaven and earth are intended, who are called upon to liſten to the Lord's appeal, and to teſtify in after ages, that the rebellions of the Iſraelites were cauſeleſs, and inexcuſable, and their miſeries juſtly merited.

V. 2. *As the rain*, &c.] As the rain, and the dew, gently diſtilling ſoften the earth, and produce a beautiful verdure, and fertility: ſo the tendency of this ſong, and the aim of it's inſpired penman were to ſoften the Iſraelites into repent-

ſpeech ſhall diſtil as the dew; as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs:

3 Becauſe I will publiſh the name of the LORD; aſcribe ye greatneſs unto our God.

4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect; for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right *is* he.

5 They have corrupted themſelves; their ſpot *is* not *the ſpot* of his children: *they are* a perverſe and crooked generation.

6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O fooliſh

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ance, and to render them fruitful in faith and good works, and proſperous in the LORD's favour: ſuch alſo would be the effect, as to numbers of them. But ſome commentators interpret the former clauſe of the judgments of God, which like torrents of impetuous rain, ſweep all down before them: and conſider it as the effect of this ſong, to haſten, and aggravate the miſeries of obſtinate ſinners amongſt them, by rendering their conduct the more inexcuſable.

V. 3—4.] The penman opens this ſacred poem, "by "publiſhing the name of the LORD;" that is by delineating that character, and thoſe perfections, which Jehovah poſſeſſes, (*ſee notes, &c. Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 5—7;) in order that all, who read this ſong, may know the glorious excellencies of that God, whom the Iſraelites forſook for their worthleſs idols. "Aſcribe ye greatneſs unto our God," that is, acknowledge his ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, omnipreſence, omniſcience, almighty power, and univerſal abſolute authority. "He is a rock:" this is the firſt time God is called a rock in Scripture: and the expreſſion ſeems to denote, that his unchangeable power, faithfulneſs, and love, (as revealed in Chriſt, and the goſpel) form an immoveable foundation, on which we may build our hopes of felicity; ſeeing nothing can alter or defeat his purpoſes, or annul his promiſes; and that under his protection we may find refuge from all our enemies, and in all our troubles: as the rocks in thoſe countries frequently ſheltered the inhabitants from the heat of the ſun, from impetuous tempeſts, and from hoſtile invaſions. Nor ſhould it be forgotten, that the water flowed from the rock for the uſe of Iſrael in the wilderneſs: and all ſpiritual conſolations in this wretched world come from God our rock, as in Chriſt the God of ſalvation. (*See Pſalm* xviii. v. 1. *Iſaiah*, c. xxxii. v. 2. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 24. c. xvi. v. 18. 1 *Cor.* c. iii. v. 11. c. x. v. 4.) "His "work is perfect." Abſolute perfection belongs only to God himſelf: relative perfection is all that belongs to creatures, and it belongs to them all, *as he at firſt made them*; to a worm as much as to an archangel. Every work of God is the reſult of perfect goodneſs, the contrivance of perfect wiſdom, and the effect of perfect power; and is complete in it's kind, and for it's uſe, and to fill it's appointed ſtation in the grand ſcale of exiſtence. Every providential diſpenſation is perfectly expreſſive of his divine juſtice, truth, goodneſs, and wiſdom. His law is perfectly holy, juſt, and good: and is perfectly ſuited to anſwer the ends, which he propoſed in giving it: his goſpel is perfect alſo, and ſuited to anſwer ſtill nobler, and more important ends. The Moſaic diſpenſation was perfectly ſuited to it's purpoſe for the appointed period. The New Teſtament diſpenſation hath a higher and more enlarged kind of perfection. Every part of the univerſal plan is perfectly fitted to the ſtation, which it occupies, and the whole is a perfect plan, and will at length be perfectly executed; as will every work, which God hath begun: nor could any alteration be made in any of his works, without proportionably deducting from their excellency. All real defect ariſes from another quarter, from apoſtacy and rebellion, and their conſequences. Much imagined defect is real excellency; and the objections made to it are the offſpring of ignorance, and pride. If that, which ſuits it's place, and anſwers the intention of it's Maker, were advanced to an higher rank of beauty, and dignity, it's relative excellence would be ſpoiled: and ſo long as the diſtinction betwixt the infinite and abſolute perfection of the Creator, and the finite capacities of the creature remained, there could be no end of ſuch vain attempts of increaſing created perfection by advancing it to ſuperior dignity: and the idea leads us to reflect on the perfection of a kingdom, where all were rulers, and no ſubjects. Theſe things ſhould not be overlooked by thoſe, on the one hand, who are continually diſcovering ſuppoſed defects in the works of God, without knowing the intention of the great contriver: and on the other hand by thoſe, who ſpeak of reaſon, and of the law of God, when diſtinguiſhing them from revelation, and from the goſpel, in ſuch degrading language, as would induce one to think, that either God were not the giver of them, or that things oppoſite to each other might proceed from the ſame immutable fountain of light, truth, and holineſs. Theſe things were intended, and are calculated for diſtinct purpoſes: and man's abuſe of them is alone to be found fault with. "All "his ways are judgment." That is, all his dealings, with his rational creatures are regulated by infallible wiſdom, and perfect juſtice. "A God of truth," of entire veracity, ſincerity, and fidelity; "and without iniquity:" never uſing his power, or authority to oppreſs, or injure any, never requiring more than his due, never puniſhing any of his innumerable ſubjects, who hath not deſerved it, or above their deſerts. "But juſt, and right is he;" and therefore none can have any cauſe to revolt againſt him, as the world in general, and as Iſrael in particular had done.

V. 5. *They have corrupted themſelves*, &c.] "God's work "is perfect," therefore ſin is not from him; and they muſt bear the blame of the perverſeneſs of their diſpoſition, and the wickedneſs of their behaviour, and of all the miſeries, which they endured in conſequence thereof.

Their ſpot, &c.] Though the profeſſing people of God are ſometimes in general called "his children:" yet Iſrael's preceding, and ſubſequent wickedneſs, notwithſtanding all the judgments, and mercies, the warnings, and perſuaſions, which united to deter them from ſin, and call them to repentance, manifeſted that they were none of God's children, and ſhewed by the deformed, and hateful likeneſs, whoſe children they indeed were: (*John*, c. viii. v. 44. 1 *John*, c. iii. v. 8—10.) God's children, in this world have indeed their ſpots, and blemiſhes: but habitual, notorious, unrepented ſin is not one of them. This is the infallible mark of the children of another father.

V. 6. *Is not he thy father*, &c.] God had acted as a people

people and unwiſe? *is* not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?

7 Remember the days of old, conſider the years of many generations: aſk thy father, and he will ſhew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee;

8 When the Moſt High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he ſeparated the ſons of Adam, he ſet the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Iſrael.

9 For the LORD's portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

10 He found him in a deſert land, and in the waſte howling wilderneſs: he led him about, he inſtructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

11 As an eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her young, ſpreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings;

12 *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no ſtrange god with him.

13 He made him ride on the high places of

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father to them, though they had renounced the relationſhip of children to him, by their apoſtacy, and idolatry, (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 2,) and were "not worthy to be called his ſons." As he had at firſt formed them men, ſo at the expence of multiplied miracles, and vaſt deſolations he had ranſomed them from Egypt, and eſtabliſhed them into a church, and nation, incorporated by charter with ſpecial privileges: and the madneſs and folly of their rebellions, and iniquities were equal to the black ingratitude of them; for they could not injure the Lord, but would ineſtimably ruin themſelves by them.

V. 7. *Remember*, &c.] This ſong would be in the mouth of great numbers, who were unacquainted with, and perhaps had not acceſs to the books of Moſes: they were therefore called upon in it, to make inquiries of their fathers, and elders, concerning their original, many ages before; who would inform them of the diſtinguiſhing kindneſs, which God had ſhewn to their progenitors, and to their children for their ſakes: ſuch inquiries might both ſtir them up to the ſtudy of their Scriptures, as far as they had opportunity, and diſcover to them in a general manner, the obligations both of gratitude and intereſt, under which they lay, to keep cloſe to the worſhip, and ſervice of Jehovah.

V. 8. *When the Moſt High*, &c.] When according to the purpoſe of "the Moſt High," who with uncontrolable authority diſpoſeth of every thing, as he pleaſeth, the earth was divided in the days of Peleg, (*Gen.* c. x,) amongſt the deſcendants of Adam, and Noah; he ſo overruled it, according to his ſecret deſigns of love to Iſrael, that the poſterity of accurſed Canaan, ſhould have that land, which he had ſelected, as their ſuitable, and ſufficient proportion: foreſeeing that by the time that the ſeed of Abraham would be multiplied into a nation, the Canaanites would have filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, and merit utter extirpation. By theſe means the Iſraelites received their aſſigned portion in a high ſtate of cultivation, and repleniſhed with cities, towns, and villages ready prepared for their reception.

V. 9. *For the Lord's*, &c.] That part of the human race, which he peculiarly values, and cultivates, as a man doth his own eſtate, and from which he receives his whole revenue of worſhip, and obedience, was typified by Iſrael, and was under that diſpenſation chiefly found amongſt them.

V. 10. *He found him*, &c.] Iſrael firſt aſſumed the form of a nation, and made their appearance as ſuch, in the barren wilderneſs, where nothing was heard before but the howling of the beaſts of prey. Here the Lord became their king, and under his government, guidance, and protection they were preſerved, and provided for: and though he led them about forty years in this waſte wilderneſs, the time was not loſt: there he inſtructed, and trained them up for the conqueſt and poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, (*notes*, c. viii.) There he found Iſrael as a nation, but he did not leave them there: and when the Amalekites, when Arad, Balak, &c, attempted to injure them; his power encloſed them about, and kept them ſafe; even as the apple, or ſight of the eye is preſerved, both by the wiſe contrivance of the Creator, and by the jealous care of the poſſeſſor, from external violence.

V. 11. *As an eagle*, &c.] The eagle is remarkable for the pains that ſhe uſes, and the methods that ſhe employs, to teach her young to fly: ſtirring them up out of the neſt, fluttering in the air over them, to ſhew them how to uſe their wings, and, when occaſion requires, carrying them upon her own wings, ſo that in order to deſtroy the young eagles, the body of the old one muſt firſt be pierced. Thus the Lord, by the meſſage of Moſes, and Aaron, excited and encouraged the enſlaved Iſraelites to leave Egypt, and effectually aſſiſted, and protected them in ſo doing: thus alſo by the preached goſpel, and the influences of the Holy Ghoſt, he excites, and prevails upon ſinners to leave ſatan's bondage, and inſtructs, defends, and effectually aſſiſts them therein: whilſt the laſt circumſtance of the eagle's tender care of her young is beautifully emblematical of his love, who interpoſed betwixt divine juſtice, and our guilty ſouls, and "bare our ſins in his own body on "the tree." In both Teſtaments young birds taken care of by the old one's are emblems of the church's ſafety under the Redeemer's protection: but in the Old Teſtament the eagle is ſelected as deſcriptive of his power; in the New, an hen is ſubſtituted, as moſt expreſſive of his condeſcenſion, and grace.

V. 12. *No ſtrange god*, &c.] None of the heathen gods had the leaſt pretence to ſhare in the honour of thoſe wonderful works of love, which Jehovah wrought in behalf of Iſrael: how abſurd, and baſe then was it for them to join theſe ſtrange Gods with, or prefer them to him, as the objects of their worſhip!

V. 13. *He made him ride*, &c.] The Lord cauſed Iſrael, as a triumphant conqueror riding in grand proceſſion, to poſſeſs the fortified cities, and inacceſſible mountains,

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the earth, that he might eat the increaſe of the fields, and he made him to ſuck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

14 Butter of kine, and milk of ſheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Baſhan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didſt drink the pure blood of the grape.

15 But Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatneſs:* then he forſook God *which* made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation.

16 They provoked him to jealouſy with ſtrange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They ſacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

18 Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art

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which the Canaanites thought ſecure from their aſſaults. The former part of this ſacred ſong referred to events ſubſequent to the days of Moſes, but here evident prediction begins: which is expreſſed in the paſt tenſe, as denoting it's moſt certain accompliſhment.

Honey out of the rock, &c.] As this is connected with the conqueſt, and the abundance of Canaan, we cannot with the leaſt propriety look back to the wilderneſs for it's accompliſhment: but muſt interpret it to mean, that the rocky parts of the promiſed land, which were the leaſt valued, and which in other lands were generally unproductive, ſhould by the peculiar bleſſing of God afford them great quantities of honey, and oil olive.

V. 14. *Kidneys of wheat*, &c.] The language of this ſong, according to the genius of poetry, eſpecially of the Eaſtern poetry, abounds with bold metaphors, which ſometimes obſcure the meaning to the generality of readers: but this verſe ſerves as a ſpecimen, according to which others leſs perſpicuous muſt be interpreted. A wheat corn being ſhaped ſomewhat like the kidney, which is ſurrounded in cattle with the choiceſt fat: and their wheat being remarkable fine, the ſacred penman calls it "the fat of the kidneys of wheat." And the production of the red, or purple grape, reſembling the colour of blood, is called "the pure blood of the grape." Thus were they favoured with the beſt of every production; and all their temporal bleſſings ſhadowed forth the ſpiritual proviſions of true believers, who by faith "eat the fleſh, and drink the "blood of the ſon of man."

V. 15. *Jeſhurun waxed fat*, &c.] The word Jeſhurun probably means "the upright one," and Iſrael was by profeſſion, and *comparatively* ſo in reality for ſome time: but in the midſt of all their mercies, they degenerated, and grew untractable, and rebellious; like the cattle that "kick "againſt," inſtead of ſubmitting to the goad. They uſed their abundance intemperately, and grew fond of luxury, and the pride of life: this rendered them forgetful of, and ungrateful to the God of their ſalvation, and indiſpoſed them for his ſpiritual worſhip, and holy ſervice: and in proportion proved an incentive to the *ſenſual* worſhip of filthy idols; to which in conſequence they apoſtatized, forſaking, and lightly eſteeming their great Benefactor: and when they were reproved for it by the prophets, or corrected for it by the Lord, they were fired with indignation, and revolted more, and more, (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 5.)

V. 17. *They ſacrificed unto devils*, &c.] The whole ſyſtem of idolatry, and every ſpecies of irreligion, falſe religion, and wickedneſs, ultimately centre in the worſhip and ſervice of ſatan: who as a ſubtle enemy unto man, and a proud rival of God, ambitiouſly aſpires to be the God, and king of this world. Not only were the evil genii of the heathens, in reality devils, fallen apoſtate ſpirits; but their good genii alſo, and all their demons and gods, as far as they had any *diſtinct* exiſtence. Whether a mere phantom, or ſome peculiar demon under the name of Baal, or Jupiter, or ſome deceaſed hero, or the virtues, or vices, &c, were worſhipped in and through their images, the things which were ſacrificed unto them, "were ſacrificed "unto devils," and thoſe proud ſpirits were gratified thereby. In this ſyſtem of ſatan, old gods, "or new gods, "newly come up," (what a monſtrous abſurdity!) the deification of living, as well as of deceaſed men; the change from one ſyſtem to another, in ceaſeleſs variety, according to man's natural love of novelty, equally ſuited *his* purpoſe, and met with his approbation. This lets us into the true ſecret of that intercommunity of gods and religions, which the *liberal* and *candid* Heathens univerſally allowed of: but which *the bigotted, and narrow minded* Jews would not conform to; and were therefore hated, and deſpiſed for their *uncharitable* ſingularity, and *affected ſtarchneſs*, whereby they condemned all their neighbours. Though the Jews were faulty in their contempt, and hatred of the Gentiles, and were really chargeable with bigotry in ſome reſpects: yet the worſhippers of Jehovah could not poſſibly have any intercommunity, with the worſhippers of the devil: Satan himſelf would have tempted them to no more, and the whole law of God forbad it. (1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 19—21.) For the ſame reaſon different modes of irreligion, or of falſe religion may admit of this *candid* intercommunity; but true Chriſtianity cannot thus be warped: and therefore many, who pride themſelves upon their candour, and liberality of ſentiment, can ſcarce find methods ſufficiently to expreſs their contempt, or deteſtation of thoſe *wretched bigots*, who explicitly declare that there is but one way of a ſinner's acceptance, and ſanctification: and that no man, who is not intereſted in the merits, and atoning ſacrifice of the truly divine Saviour, and is not a partaker of his regenerating Spirit, can poſſibly obtain heaven, or eſcape everlaſting condemnation, whatever be his moral character amongſt men. Yet to this all true Chriſtians ſhould adhere: and then by ſhewing others, who are not favoured with this knowledge of Chriſt, all civil reſpect, and all tender kindneſs; by being always diſpoſed to ſympathiſe with, and ready to relieve them, they ſhould convince them, that not proud bigotry, and uncharitable ſeverity dictates ſuch a profeſſion; but regard to the truth of God's word, and a reluctancy to do any thing to bolſter up the groundleſs hopes of thoſe, who neglect ſuch great ſalvation. And

unmindful,

unmindful, and haſt forgotten God that formed thee.

19 And when the LORD ſaw *it*, he abhorred *them*, becauſe of the provoking of his ſons and of his daughters.

20 And he ſaid, I will hide my face from them, I will ſee what their end *ſhall be:* for they *are* a very froward generation, children in whom *is* no faith.

21 They have moved me to jealouſy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealouſy with *thoſe which are* not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a fooliſh nation.

22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and ſhall burn unto the loweſt hell, and ſhall conſume the earth with her increaſe, and ſet on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 I will heap miſchief upon them; I will ſpend mine arrows upon them.

24 *They ſhall be* burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter deſtruction: I will alſo ſend the teeth of beaſts upon them, with the poiſon of ſerpents of the duſt.

25 The ſword without, and terror within, ſhall deſtroy both the young man and the virgin, the ſuckling *alſo*, with the man of gray hairs.

26 I ſaid, I would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to ceaſe from among men:

27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adverſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely, *and* leſt they ſhould ſay, Our hand *is* high, and the LORD hath not done all this.

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whilſt they render unto God all the honour "of making "them to differ;" and pour out their fervent prayers for the converſion of their enemies and ſlanderers: and whilſt they cultivate meekneſs, and modeſty, and an unoſtentatious courteouſneſs, and gentleneſs of manners, and blameleſſneſs of life; they may ſoften, though they cannot utterly avoid the injurious charge of bigotry.

V. 19. *Becauſe of the provoking*, &c.] They are called his ſons, and his daughters, in reſpect of their privileges, with whom, in reſpect of their character that relation is renounced, (v. 5;) having received their natural and national exiſtence, and all their peculiar bleſſings from the Lord, they ſo provoked him by their idolatries, that he even abhorred them, and as it were turned them out of his houſe. But they, who being born of the Spirit, are made partakers of a divine nature, have his fear put into their hearts, that they ſhould not *thus* depart from, and provoke their heavenly Father.

V. 20. *I will hide*, &c.] The Lord here declares that he will withdraw his protection, and withhold his wonted interpoſition in their favour; and whilſt they groaned under the effects of their own folly, he would look on as an unconcerned ſpectator of their ſufferings, until they were brought to the utmoſt extremities: becauſe they were a froward, and perverſe generation, deſtitute both of their fathers faith in, and faithfulneſs to him.

V. 21. *I will move*, &c.] Though many of the judgments, which were inflicted on the offending Iſraelites by the Canaanites, Philiſtines, Midianites, &c, might form a partial accompliſhment of this prediction: yet St. Paul applies it to it's proper event, when he adduces it in proof of the calling of the Gentiles into the church; (*Rom.* c. x. v. 19.) The Jews had proudly treated the heathen as fooliſh, and worthleſs, and even as dogs compared with themſelves, to whom as children they ſuppoſed all ſpiritual privileges, excluſively, and indefeaſibly belonged: and it provoked their jealouſy to a degree of indignant rage, to ſee them enter into the church, and by the apoſtles of Chriſt admitted to equal privileges with themſelves: this eventually tended to their own entire excluſion, and hath even to this very day exceedingly exaſperated them againſt Chriſtianity and Chriſtians.

V. 22. *A fire is kindled*, &c.] (*See note*, v. 14.) The tremendous effects of the wrath of God are repreſented under the metaphor of a fire, which, being kindled upon the ſurface, ſhould burn, as we ſhould ſpeak, even the centre of the earth; and according to a very general notion of the ancients, quite through to the place of miſerable departed ſpirits: but in the expreſſion there is an evident intimation of the indignation of the Lord purſuing the wicked, after death, to that place, where "their worm "never dieth, and the fire is not quenched."

V. 24. *Serpents of the duſt*, &c.] Which crawl upon, and lick the duſt, (*ſee note*, *Gen.* c. iii. v. 14.) The miſery, which ſhould come upon the Jewiſh nation, is in theſe verſes deſcribed in a variety of highly poetical expreſſions, the particular elucidation of which, belongs rather to philology, than theology; and therefore falls not within the deſign of notes, intended merely for edification.

V. 26, 27.] The idolatry, and rebellions of Iſrael deſerved, and the juſtice of God ſeemed to demand, that they ſhould be baniſhed to the remoteſt corners of the earth, where they ſhould never more be heard of; or even that they ſhould be extirpated: but he knew that his enemies would attribute ſuch a cataſtrophe to a wrong cauſe, and that their hearts would in conſequence be elated with inſufferable inſolence, and emboldened to utter the moſt horrible blaſphemies, and hardened in infidelity, and the denial of all, that the Scripture hiſtory records of his wonderful works of old: therefore he determined to ſpare them, and he ſtill continues them to be living witneſſes of the truth of the Scriptures, and confutations of all infidelity. And by their exiſtence as a people at this day, they confront ſuch daring blaſphemers: and he, who knows the ſpirit of

28 For they *are* a nation void of counſel, neither *is there any* underſtanding in them.

29 O that they were wiſe, *that* they underſtood this, *that* they would conſider their latter end!

30 How ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight, except their Rock had ſold them, and the LORD had ſhut them up?

31 For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themſelves *being* judges.

32 For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes *are* grapes of gall, their cluſters *are* bitter:

33 Their wine *is* the poiſon of dragons, and the cruel venom of aſps.

34 *Is* not this laid up in ſtore with me, *and* ſealed up among my treaſures?

35 To me *belongeth* vengeance and recompence: their foot ſhall ſlide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte.

36 For the LORD ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none ſhut up or left.

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modern infidels, and deiſts, (ſo called,) will perceive that their triumphs would have been more inſolent, and their blaſphemies more abundant, had there been no traces of ſuch a people as the Jews any where upon the earth to be diſcovered. And what uſe may hereafter be made of them, may more eaſily be imagined, than exactly aſcertained: but we are ſure that they are preſerved for wiſe, and holy purpoſes, and the Scripture prophecies give us ſome general idea, what thoſe purpoſes are. By an adventurous figure, the ſacred poet aſcribes to the Almighty language taken from the conduct of men, who are deterred from ſuch things, as they have a ſtrong inclination to, through fear of diſagreeable conſequences: as God abhors infidelity, and blaſphemy, and is determined not to afford ſinners this occaſion for them, he is ſaid, "to fear the wrath of the "enemy;" becauſe he acted, as men do, when they are thus afraid.

V. 29. *O that they were wiſe*, &c.] The wiſdom of Iſrael would have appeared in conſidering theſe things, in adverting to the conſequences of their conduct, and in avoiding all ſuch things, as led to national ruin, and in following all ſuch things, as conduced to national proſperity; keeping the promiſes, denunciations, and predictions, with which they were favoured, continually before their eyes. This would have been to conſider their latter end. The ſame applies to individuals, with reſpect to their future, and eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery. The ſecrets of futurity belong not to us, but to the Lord: notwithſtanding all the predictions which were delivered concerning the people of Iſrael, it ſtill remained certain, that they would have proſpered, had they been obedient: and notwithſtanding the divine decrees, it is equally certain, that none will come ſhort of eternal life, but thoſe, who remain wilfully impenitent, and unbelievers. And it is ſo agreeable to the divine holineſs, and love, that his rational creatures ſhould be obedient and happy, and that ſinners ſhould repent, believe the goſpel, live holy lives, and be ſaved, that he is repreſented as deſiring, and even wiſhing for it; (*Pſalm*, lxxxi. v. 13. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 41, 42;) which muſt be underſtood in the ſame manner, as his "fearing the wrath of the "enemy:" With reference to the conduct, which he approves in his creatures: not with reſpect to his own conduct in the government of the world, which is always perfectly wiſe, righteous, faithful, and good; but often unfathomably deep, and awfully myſterious; and calls for our ſilent acquieſcence, and reverential adoration.

V. 30. *Except their Rock*, &c.] If they had not provoked God by their crimes, to ſell them as ſlaves, and deliver them as malefactors ſhut up in priſon, into the hands of their enemies, who unconſciouſly performed the office of executioners upon them; none could poſſibly have prevailed againſt them, but all muſt have fallen under them.

V. 31. *Their rock*, &c.] The idols of the enemies of Iſrael, on which they profeſſed to place their dependance, had never equalled the wondrous works of Jehovah for Iſrael, even by their own confeſſion: (1 *Sam.* c. iv. v. 7, 8;) they therefore could never have prevailed againſt them, had not their Rock, who formerly protected them, been turned away from, yea turned againſt them.

V. 32, 33.] The nation of Iſrael, though planted a generous vine of an excellent ſtock, in a rich ſoil, and with every advantage in the culture of it; (*Iſaiah*, c. v. ver. 1—9.) brought not forth the good fruits of righteouſneſs; nay even exceeded Sodom, and Gomorrah in wickedneſs: and as this conduct, *in them*, was more diſhonourable to God, and more poiſonous, (ſo to ſpeak,) to the minds of others, by prejudicing them againſt their God, and religion, it would therefore be eventually more bitter to themſelves.

V. 34, 35.] (*Rom* c. ii. v. 5.) All their wickedneſs was recorded, and remembered of God, until the appointed time of vengeance: and it would then appear, that it had been reſerved in ſtore, to be produced againſt them, in manifeſtation of the divine juſtice in their puniſhment; even as a man depoſits, and ſeals up his treaſures in a ſecure place, until he wants to make uſe of them.—For it belongeth to him to execute vengeance upon the wicked: but he waits the moſt proper ſeaſon; and though his judgments ſeem to linger, they in reality make haſte, and are at hand: (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 3. c. iii. v. 8, 9:) and when ſinners deem themſelves moſt ſecure, and ſuppoſe that their foot ſtands firm, he cauſes it to ſlide in due time, and down they ſuddenly fall into deſtruction. (*Pſ.* lxxiii. v. 17—19.)

V. 36. *For the Lord*, &c.] Theſe words not only mean, that the Lord would plead the cauſe of, and ſave the remnant that in every age were exceptions to the general rule: nor are they to be reſtricted to the reſcue of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity; or to the coming of the Meſſias, or to any of their paſt deliverances: but as

37 And

37 And he ſhall ſay, Where *are* their gods, *their* rock in whom they truſted;

38 Which did eat the fat of their ſacrifices, *and* drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them riſe up and help you, *and* be your protection.

39 See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and ſay, I live for ever.

41 If I whet my glittering ſword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.

42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my ſword ſhall devour fleſh; *and that* with the blood of the ſlain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people; for he will avenge the blood of his ſervants, and will render vengeance to his adverſaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people.

44 And Moſes came and ſpake all the words of this ſong in the ears of the people, he, and Hoſea the ſon of Nun.

45 And Moſes made an end of ſpeaking all theſe words to all Iſrael.

46 And he ſaid unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I teſtify among you this day; which ye ſhall command your children to obſerve, to do all the words of this law.

47 For it *is* not a vain thing for you; becauſe it *is* your life: and through this thing ye ſhall prolong *your* days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to poſſeſs it.

48 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes that ſelf ſame day, ſaying,

49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, *unto* mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over againſt Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Iſrael for a poſſeſſion;

50 And die in the mount whither thou goeſt up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron

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this ſacred poem relates to the ſame events, which have already been repeatedly conſidered; (*Lev.* c. xxvi. *Deut.* c. xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxx;) this cloſing part muſt refer to the ſame future mercies, with which thoſe prophecies concluded; even their future converſion, and reſtoration. When the appointed period arrives the Lord will plead their cauſe, and avenge them upon all their oppreſſors: he will change his conduct towards them, as a man doth, when he repents: but not till he hath brought them into utter diſtreſs, ſo that none of them ſhall be any where exempted from hoſtile depredations; or left, who ſhall not be carried captives, and at the mercy of their conquerors; and till they are brought to renounce all dependance on human help. This evidently refers to the final conqueſt and deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, and the conſequent entire deſolation of their whole land, and their long-continued diſperſion, which enſued.

V. 37, 38.] The rejection of the Meſſiah by the Jewiſh nation was evidently conſidered as the continuation of their ancient idolatry, apoſtacy, and rebellion: for which the Lord hath reproved them, and he will convince them of the guilt, and folly of it, before he delivers them. Thus he will make them ſenſible that he alone, who for their ſins hath reduced them to ſo abject a ſtate of miſery, can recover them from it; and they ſhall be brought to humble themſelves before him, to repent of their ſins, and to truſt in, and call upon the Lord, through their long-rejected Mediator, for ſalvation; and then he will appear for their deliverance, and make their proſperity as eminent, as ever their miſeries have been extraordinary.

V. 40. *For I lift*, &c.] This is ſpoken after the manner of men, and according to their method of taking a ſolemn oath.

And ſay I live for ever.] That is, if Jehovah ſwear by his own ſelf-exiſtence, and eternity, the ſentence whether of mercy, or of judgment, becomes irrevocable, and irreverſible.

V. 41.] If the Lord prepare for vengeance, as a man for battle, and put his hand to the dreadful work of deſtruction, he will do it effectually; nor ſhall any of thoſe, who have provoked his indignation, be able either to reſiſt, or eſcape. And eſpecially he will revenge himſelf upon all thoſe, who at any time have injured his people, out of enmity to them, and him. For this concluſion ſeems to relate to the final deliverance of Iſrael, and the deſtruction of all who oppoſe that deliverance, and of every enemy of God, and his people. Future events may hereafter illuſtrate this part of the prophecy, as hiſtory hath done the foregoing parts of it.

V. 43. *Rejoice ye*, &c.] (*Rom.* c. xv. v. 10.) When the Gentiles were called into the church, upon the Jews rejection of the goſpel, this prophecy began to be accompliſhed: but when upon their future converſion, the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be brought in, and all oppoſers be deſtroyed, it will be completely fulfilled. (*Romans*, c. xi. v. 23—32.

V. 49—52.] Moſes having received this ſummons, gave the tribes of Iſrael his parting bleſſing, and then rendered a prompt obedience unto it.

thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

51 Becauſe ye treſpaſſed againſt me among the children of Iſrael, at the waters of Meribah-Kadeſh, in the wilderneſs of Zin; becauſe ye ſanctified me not in the midſt of the children of Iſrael.

52 Yet thou ſhalt ſee the land before *thee*; but thou ſhalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Iſrael.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Divine truth, when propoſed with ſerioufneſs, ſolemnity, and affection, and accompanied with fervent prayers for a bleſſing upon it, is like the diſtilling ſhowers, which water, and fructify the earth: and though numbers neither ſeek, nor ſhare this bleſſing; yet ſome will at all times wait upon God for that preparation of heart, which ſecures it's ſucceſs. (*Iſaiah*, c. lv. ver. 10. 2 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 15—17.)—When the glorious character, and gracious dealings of the Lord with men; and the whole character, and conduct of every one towards him ſhall be completely publiſhed before all the inhabitants of heaven and earth; either his juſtice in their deſtruction, or his free mercy in their ſalvation will be univerſally acknowledged, and glorified: and it will then appear that none had any thing, of which to boaſt, and that all had cauſe to confeſs, "that it "was of the Lord's mercy, they had not been long before "conſumed." In every controverſy of the Lord with his creatures, the whole creation will be as his witneſſes for the conviction, and confuſion of thoſe who ſin againſt him: for his creating, and providential goodneſs hath laid every rational agent under ſuch obligations entirely to love, and ſerve him, that their ingratitude, and neglect of him, will admit of no excuſe. (*Rom.* c. i. v. 18—20.) And every diſtinguiſhing bleſſing, which we enjoy, enhances our obligation, and aggravates the criminality of ungodlineſs. The land of our nativity, the place of our abode, and all that profuſion of temporal advantages, which many of us ſo richly poſſeſs, are as much his eſpecial appointment, as Canaan was intended for, and given to Iſrael: nor can we complain of a country leſs favoured of heaven than even the land of promiſe itſelf. But alas! like Jeſhurun, we have too generally grown luxurious, and ſenſual, untractable, and ungodly: the irreligion, infidelity, and profligacy, which have ſprung from our national wealth, and proſperity, and have almoſt inundated our land, are no leſs aggravated than Iſrael's idolatry, and equally provoke the Lord's jealouſy, and anger. And whatever may be the conſequence to us, as a nation; the fire of divine vengeance burns even to the loweſt hell againſt unnumbered multitudes, who live, and die, and periſh in their ſins. We alſo, like Iſrael of old, are ſingularly favoured with the light of revelation, and the ordinances of true religion, and are profeſſedly the Lord's people: but our ſpots are not the ſpots of his children; our dark and ſteep ſtains of every atrocious iniquity too evidently prove, that in general we are Chriſtians no more than in name. We hear indeed of a redemption far more precious, than that of Iſrael out of Egypt, but unleſs "we are redeemed "from all iniquity, and purified unto the Redeemer, as "his peculiar people zealous of good works," our privileges will but enhance our condemnation. And whilſt multitudes ſeem to deem themſelves branches of the true vine, "their grapes are the grapes of Sodom, and the "wine thereof the poiſon of dragons, and the cruel venom "of aſps." Suitable to ſuch a conduct will be their doom, for they are day by day "treaſuring up wrath againſt the "day of wrath;" and the whole maſs of iniquity, which they have committed will ere long be produced againſt them, and proportionable vengeance executed upon them. "O that men were wiſe, that they underſtood "theſe things!" For our wiſdom conſiſts not in ſagaciouſly laying, and executing plans of worldly advancement, but "in conſidering our latter end;" and with the revelation of a future ſtate, and judgment before our eyes, in preparing for that awful period, when we muſt finally leave all earthly things, and enter into the eternal world, and have our portion allotted us either in heavenly joys, or in the torments of hell, and that for ever. But ſo merciful is our holy God, and ſo doth he delight in the converſion, and ſalvation of ſinners: ſo well ordered are all things in the covenant of grace, and ſo freely are all the bleſſings of that covenant propoſed, through our loving, able, faithful Saviour, to the chief of ſinners, than none need be diſcouraged: nay except we "lightly eſteem the Rock of "our ſalvation," and wilfully prefer other dependances, or the ſervice of the devil, in the gratification of our ſinful luſts, to him, and his ſervice, and all his bleſſings; we cannot be excluded from them. And neither the ſenſual, the ambitious, or the covetous, nor yet the phariſaical, and ſuperſtitious, nor thoſe who invoke ſaints, and angels, can think, or pretend to ſay, "that their rock is as our Rock." O that they would therefore be perſuaded to build their hopes on this Rock of ages, to ſhelter their ſouls in him, and to ſeek thoſe waters of life, which flow from him! But his own preventing grace muſt accompany the invitations of his word; or the pride, and wickedneſs of the human heart will render them all abortive. All the appointments of his Providence ſubſerve the purpoſes of his love to his church, and to every true member of it: and "known unto him are all his works from before the "foundation of the world." He finds his people dead in ſin, and ſlaves of ſatan, yea baſely in love with their chains. And even when his meſſage, "warning them to flee from "wrath to come," has alarmed their fears, they are ſtill diſpoſed to cleave to earthly objects, and averſe to the ſuppoſed difficulties, and perils of a godly life. But his Spirit quickens their ſouls, ſtirs them from the duſt, and creates the willing mind: then doth he convincingly, and ſweetly teach them their danger, and the way of eſcape, and ſalvation; and yields them effectual aſſiſtance in treading thoſe hitherto unknown paths. (*Iſaiah*, c. xlii. v. 16.) Thus are they numbered amongſt the redeemed of the Lord, become his worſhippers, are repleniſhed with the richeſt ſpiritual bleſſings from the rock of ſalvation, rank amongſt the ſons of God, and heirs of glory, begin their victories, and triumphs, and taſte the earneſt of heavenly joys. But alas! how frequently do even true Chriſtians merit the reproach of folly and ingratitude, in requiting the Lord, who

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1ſt. An introduction to the bleſſings which Moſes pronounced upon the tribes of Iſrael before his death, v. 1—5. 2d. The bleſſing itſelf addreſſed to the different tribes, v. 6—25. 3d. The laſt parting words of Moſes, deſcribing the felicity of God's people, v. 26—29.

AND this *is* the bleſſing, wherewith Moſes the man of God bleſſed the children of Iſrael before his death.

2 And he ſaid, The LORD came from Sinai, and roſe up from Seir unto them; he ſhined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thouſands of ſaints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them.

hath bought them with his blood, and formed and eſtabliſhed them by his grace to be his people, with ſuch unſuitable returns! Oft do they grieve his Spirit, ſometimes they even diſhonour his name, through inordinate attachment to ſome earthly object, or by ſome diſobedience, negligence, or perverſeneſs. Then is he moved to jealouſy, hides his face from them, and makes uſe of his chaſtening rod; and with repeated, and ſtill heavier ſtrokes, proceeds to correct them, until they are convinced of, and humbled for their ſin, and renouncing all other help, ſeek deliverance from him alone, and learn to kiſs the very rod, which occaſioned the ſmart. For this humiliation he waits, nor will he ſhew his reconciled face, until it take place: but when this effect hath been produced, he, who wounded will heal, and he who afflicted, will relieve and comfort them; nor can any but he do it.—For his own glory, and to ſilence the blaſphemies of his enemies, he will not proceed to thoſe extremities, which he might righteouſly inflict; but he will bring all his true people to repentance; and though they oft offend, and are often chaſtiſed, the whole ſhall iſſue in their final ſalvation; and in the execution of condign puniſhment upon all their perſecutors and oppreſſors; who could have had no power over them; except as the Lord had been pleaſed to uſe them as inſtruments of correction: howbeit they meant not ſo, but expreſſed their enmity againſt him by their injuries of his people.—A long conflict there hath alſo been on earth betwixt the cauſe of truth, and holineſs, and that of error, and ungodlineſs; but the whole ſhall iſſue in the final and univerſal triumph of true religion, and the ruin of all it's opponents: which will be the prelude to the eternal ſeparation, and difference betwixt the friends and enemies of God, in the unſeen world. Ere long that ſeparation, and difference will take place with every one of us; we "ſhall ſoon be bid to put off this our "tabernacle." Then they, who wallowing in ſin, rioting in luxury, or glorying in their wealth, have lightly eſteemed the Rock of ſalvation, will though too late perceive their folly. Happy they who are called to meet death from being faithfully employed in the work of the Lord! and who die with the promiſed inheritance full in view, and with a clear aſſurance of eternal life. Yet let the redeemed of the Lord walk circumſpectly, leſt ſome falſe ſtep, which they have taken, ſhould be remembered againſt them upon a death bed, and render that cloſing ſcene leſs comfortable. Let us all be contented in obſcurity, and poverty, if allotted us, being more favourable to godlineſs: let the rich and proſperous rejoice with trembling, leſt they ſhould have their portion in this world; and watch and pray, leſt they ſhould be lifted up to their hurt. Let us all recommend religion to our children, and thoſe around us, as no vain thing, but our eternal life: and let us pray that the bleſſings of it may be extended to the remoteſt nation of the earth.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 1. *This is the bleſſing*, &c.] To all his precepts, exhortations, warnings, and prophecies, in proſe and in poetry, Moſes added, before his final parting, a ſolemn benediction; which may be conſidered as the expreſſion of his cordial good will to, and his fervent prayers for them, notwithſtanding the ſevere rebukes, and awful curſes, which he uttered; or as a prophecy which he was inſpired to deliver unto them, that related to the ſituation and circumſtances of their ſeveral tribes. In this reſpect it exceedingly reſembled the bleſſings, which Jacob pronounced upon his ſons, (*Gen.* xxix;) and intimated, that notwithſtanding their rebellions, and the preceding alarming predictions, the Lord had bleſſings in reſerve for them. Probably the heads of the ſeveral tribes were gathered around Moſes, after he received the ſummons recorded in the cloſe of the former chapter, and juſt before he aſcended the mount, where he ended his life. This chapter therefore contains the laſt dying words of this eminent ſervant of God; and calls to our remembrance "the "prophet like unto him," who both diſcourſed with his diſciples the evening before his crucifixion for their conſolation, and bleſſed them juſt when he was parted from them, and went up into heaven. And doubtleſs this parting interview was very pathetic, and would leave a durable impreſſion upon the minds of the people. Moſes introduced theſe bleſſings alſo with a brief retroſpect to former mercies, which they had received from God, through his inſtrumentality; for on theſe ſubjects we cannot reflect too frequently.

V. 2. *The Lord came from*, &c.] Theſe expreſſions are poetical, and likewiſe refer to ſcenes, which would be much better conceived by the Iſraelites, than they can be by us. When Jehovah came down to manifeſt his glory, and promulgate his law from mount Sinai, either the ſplendour of his majeſty illumined the diſtant mountains of Seir and Paran; or his approach was preceded by ſome glorious appearances from thoſe mountains, as the riſing ſun is uſhered in by the light of the dawning day, (*Hab.* c. iii. v. 3.)

Ten thouſands of ſaints] "Of holy ones," that is, of holy angels, who were miniſtering ſpirits, in that grand diſplay of the divine Majeſty.

From his right hand, &c.] The Lord thence gave them his law, not only by ſpeaking it with a loud voice from the midſt of the fire, but by writing it upon tables of ſtone, which he delivered to Iſrael to keep, as a ſacred depoſit, and the obedience unto which he enforced with his whole power and authority. It is called a fiery law, not only as delivered from the fire, but becauſe of the fiery indignation, to which tranſgreſſors thereof are doomed, by reaſon of

3 Yea, he loved the people: all his ſaints *are* in thy hand: and they ſat down at thy feet; *every one* ſhall receive of thy words.

4 Moſes commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.

5 And he was king in Jeſhurun, when the heads of the people *and* the tribes of Iſrael were gathered together.

6 Let Reuben live, and not die; and let *not* his men be few.

7 And this *is the bleſſing* of Judah: and he ſaid, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be ſufficient for him; and be thou an help *to him* from his enemies.

8 And of Levi he ſaid, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didſt prove at Maſſah, *and with* whom thou didſt ſtrive at the waters of Meribah;

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which no fleſh can be juſtified by it. Its ſanctifying effect alſo, when written in the hearts of believers by the finger of the Spirit, where, as fire, it conſumes the luſts, purifies the affections, and aſſimilates the ſoul to its own holy nature, may alſo be referred to.

V. 3. *Yea, he loved*, &c.] This fiery law was not promulgated *againſt*, but *for them*, as a proof of his love, and becauſe he had choſen them for his peculiar people, a holy nation: for in ſubſeryiency to the goſpel, it much conduced to render them holy, as well as to evidence them to be ſo. And as all who were thus ſanctified, were under his ſpecial protection: ſo they all would ſit at his feet, and receive theſe his words, that they might believe and obey them, (*Luke*, c. x. v. 39.)

V. 4. *Moſes commanded*, &c.] The law was given *from* God, and *by* Moſes, who was alſo the mediator of that covenant, by which the congregation of Jacob's poſterity was incorporated, and which guaranteed unto them their inheritance, whilſt they retained their national fidelity.

V. 5. *And he was a king*, &c.] Moſes not only acted as a prophet, to deliver the law in God's name unto the people, but as a king, in ſeeing it put in force during his life: he poſſeſſed all the authority, and performed all the functions of a king, though he neither took upon him the the name nor the ſtate of royalty; and though he joined with him the heads of the people, and of the tribes, both as his council, and as ſubordinate magiſtrates over thouſands and hundreds, in their ſeveral tribes. Some ſuppoſe, that Jehovah himſelf is here meant; and doubtleſs he was king over Iſrael in all ages, and in an eſpecial manner, whoſoever was his deputy.

V. 6. *Let Reuben*, &c.] The order in which the tribes are here bleſſed, is not the ſame in which Jacob had bleſſed them; nor does it accord to any other order that is elſewhere obſerved. However Reuben, the firſt born, though degraded by Jacob, (*ſee notes*, &c. *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 4;) and ſuperſeded by Judah, as to the precedency in their encampments, is here firſt mentioned. Notwithſtanding that diſgrace, and the rebellion in the wilderneſs, of this tribe, under Dathan, Abiram, and On, about the government, in which many of them periſhed, Moſes here predicted, that it ſhould not be deſtroyed, but ſhould be multiplied to a great number; by which he alſo expreſſed his cordial forgiveneſs of, and good will to them, notwithſtanding their perſonal inſults of him. As the Reubenites, having received their inheritance eaſt of Jordan, were preparing to croſs that river, and fight for their brethren, we may alſo ſuppoſe, that ſome reference is had to that circumſtance, and that the bleſſing implies a prayer for their protection.

V. 7.] Judah was appointed to be the governing and the conquering tribe: Moſes therefore prayed for, and predicted to them, deliverance and victory, when they went forth to battle, and a ſafe and triumphant return to their people: the aſſiſtance of a ſufficient number from the other tribes, and eſpecially the help of the Lord of Hoſts himſelf. All this was evidently fulfilled to this tribe until the days of Chriſt. And ſome commentators interpret the clauſe, "bring him to his people," as predicting the coming of the Meſſias, who ſprang from Judah. (*See notes, Gen.* c. xlix. v. 8—12.)

V. 8. *And of Levi*, &c.] Levi, as well as Simeon, had been left under a ſevere rebuke by Jacob, (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 7.) Simeon, having nowiſe diſtinguiſhed himſelf, was entirely omitted by Moſes. This tribe had probably been notoriouſly guilty in the tranſgreſſion of Baal Peor, and had been greatly reduced in the wilderneſs, (*Num.* c. i. v. 23. c. xxvi. v. 14.) It had it's portion aſſigned within the lot of Judah, (*Joſhua*, c. xix. v. 1;) and was much incorporated with them, or diſperſed through the other tribes: and perhaps for theſe reaſons, was not ſeparately mentioned in this prophecy. But in the caſe of Levi, the curſe had been turned into a bleſſing, with reference to the tranſactions here mentioned. This tribe was the dying prophet's own tribe, but he more regarded it as the Lord's tribe; and as the welfare of Iſrael was ſo immediately connected with that of Levi, he expatiated the more in his benediction of, and prediction concerning it. The Urim and Thummim, or illuminations, and perfections, (*note, Exod.* c. xxviii. v. 30;) whereby the High Prieſt inquired of the Lord, formed one diſtinguiſhing token of his favour to the Levitical prieſthood, which Moſes prayed for, and predicted the continuance of, to Aaron's ſucceſſors to future ages: and in ſo doing, implied alſo the continuance of all needful gifts and graces, to every order of that tribe, that they might fill up their ſeveral places, to the glory of God, and the maintenance of true religion in Iſrael. Yet it is confeſſed by the Jews, that the Urim and Thummim were loſt in the Babyloniſh captivity, and nothing ſubſtituted in their room. But in our "Holy One," our Great High Prieſt, whom Aaron and his ſons feebly ſhadowed forth, the things ſignified thereby remain, and from him are communicated to all his true miniſters and people, according to their meaſures.

Whom thou didſt prove, &c.] There were two Meribahs, one of which is alſo called Maſſah, (*Exod.* c. xvii.

9 Who ſaid unto his father and to his mother, I have not ſeen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have obſerved thy word, and kept thy covenant.

10 They ſhall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Iſrael thy law: they ſhall put incenſe before thee, and whole burnt-ſacrifice upon thine altar.

11 Bleſs, LORD, his ſubſtance, and accept the work of his hands: ſmite through the loins of them that riſe againſt him, and of them that hate him, that they riſe not again.

12 *And* of Benjamin he ſaid, The beloved of the LORD ſhall dwell in ſafety by him; *and the LORD* ſhall cover him all the day long, and he ſhall dwell between his ſhoulders.

13 And of Joſeph he ſaid, Bleſſed of the LORD *be* his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,

14 And for the precious fruits *brought forth* by the ſun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the laſting hills,

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v. 7.) where probably Aaron and the Levites remarkably diſtinguiſhed themſelves in oppoſing the murmurs of the people. At the other Meribah, (*Num.* c. xx. v. 13.) Aaron was found faulty; yet it is a tradition, that the tribe of Levi approved themſelves faithful. However it refers to ſome remarkable inſtance, in which they were proved, and honourably diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the Lord's behalf.

V. 9. *Who ſaid*, &c.] In the provocation of the golden calf, the Levites, at God's command, inflicted puniſhment upon the ringleaders, without reſpect to rank or relation, and in a very zealous and impartial manner, (*Exod* c. xxxii. v. 26—29;) in which guilt perhaps ſome of their own tribe and near relations were deeply involved, whom they no more ſpared than other criminals, (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 26. 2 *Cor.* c. v. v. 16;) and though men might cenſure ſuch ſeverity, God highly approved of it, and honoured thoſe who ſo honoured him. This may be alluded to; but probably it particularly means that diſintereſtedneſs and deadneſs to all carnal affections, that indifference about the preferment or affluence of themſelves or families, and that impartiality and ſuperiority to perſonal reſpects, and the fear of man; when the command, the covenant, and the glory of God are concerned, which were required of, and found in theſe firſt prieſts of the Lord; and which are requiſite to fit all miniſters for, and incline them to chooſe that work, in preference to more lucrative employments, (*Mal.* c. ii. v. 7.)

V. 10. *They ſhall teach*, &c.] Beſides the offering of ſacrifices, and officiating at the ſanctuary, the prieſts and Levites were the authoriſed public teachers, through the cities and villages in the ſeveral tribes of Iſrael. Too many of them were in after ages more attentive to their perquiſites than to their duty, (as is generally the caſe in ſimilar collective bodies;) and the ignorance and wickedneſs of the people were frequently chargeable upon their neglect and ſcandalous lives; and the prophets were extraordinary meſſengers ſent from God, eſpecially to reprove and ſtir them up to do their duty. However their office continued, and many pious and excellent men were found amongſt them, and much good redounded to Iſrael from them, until the coming of Chriſt, and the abolition of the Moſaic inſtitution.

V. 11. *Bleſs, Lord, his ſubſtance*, &c.] The Levites had no landed inheritance, but they had their maintenance out of the Lord's *dues*, ſo to ſpeak, by which means their intereſts were connected with the ſupport of the worſhip of the Lord. On this their portion Moſes prays for, and predicts a ſpecial bleſſing from God: though ſome interpret this clauſe of their abilities for their ſacred miniſtry, that the Lord would both enable them to, and proſper them in their work. Their faithful diſcharge of their office would excite many enemies againſt them; many would grudge and ſtrive to defraud them of their dues; and many would be ready to vote their abolition as uſeleſs, that they might ſeize upon their revenues: but vengeance was here prophetically denounced againſt all who ſhould hate, or riſe up againſt them, in any manner, or any account, or for any purpoſe.

V. 12. *Of Benjamin*, &c.] The tribe of Benjamin had their inheritance cloſe to mount Zion: a great part of Jeruſalem, and ſome ſuppoſe that the temple itſelf, was ſituated within it. This was a diſtinguiſhing token of the Lord's love to them. This ſanctuary was their ſecurity, whilſt they kept cloſe to it: they were covered by the protection of the Lord continually, and had his power engaged in their behalf. Accordingly this tribe adhered to Judah, and to the family of David, and the worſhip of God, when the ten tribes revolted and apoſtatized, and they became inſeparably united to, and incorporated with the tribe of Judah.

V. 13, 14. *And of Joſeph*, &c.] It is here predicted, that the inheritance of thoſe tribes which deſcended from Joſeph, ſhould be peculiarly productive, through the bleſſing of God upon it. By means of the ſeaſonable rains, and refreſhing dews, thoſe "precious things," which come down from above, and make the earth fruitful; and by means of the ſprings which iſſued from beneath, and the benign influences of the ſun, all kinds of valuable productions, peculiar to each revolving moon in ſucceſſion, would be abundantly afforded them.

V. 15.] The mountains and hills alſo would grow for their uſe, vines, and olives, and timber trees; and from beneath would be dug metals, and minerals, and ſtone for building, &c.

16 And for the precious things of the earth and fulneſs thereof; and *for* the good will of him that dwelt in the buſh; let *the bleſſing* come upon the head of Joſeph, and upon the top of the head of him that was ſeparated from his brethren.

17 His glory *is like* the firſtling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns; with them he ſhall puſh the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thouſands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thouſands of Manaſſeh.

18 And of Zebulun he ſaid, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Iſſachar, in thy tents.

19 They ſhall call the people unto the mountain; there they ſhall offer ſacrifices of righteouſneſs: for they ſhall ſuck of the abundance of the ſeas, and *of* treaſures hid in the ſand.

20 And of Gad he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.

21 And he provided the firſt part for himſelf, becauſe there, *in* a portion of the lawgiver, *was he* ſeated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the juſtice of the LORD, and his judgments with Iſrael.

V. 16.] In brief, their land ſhould abound in every precious production, which the earth, and it's fulneſs can afford: all which, with a variety of ſpiritual privileges, would deſcend upon theſe tribes from the good will, and peculiar kindneſs of Jehovah. The firſt appearance of the Lord to Moſes, in the burning buſh, and the promiſes, which he had thence given, and ſince ſo faithfully, and powerfully performed, were recollected with grateful pleaſure by the dying prophet; and he characterized him, who was thus to bleſs the ſons of Joſeph, from this circumſtance, that he condeſcended once, as the God of Abraham, and his ſeed, to take up his reſidence for a ſeaſon in the mean unſightly buſh; and had now taken up his more abiding reſidence in the midſt of Iſrael, who was equally unmeet for, and unworthy of ſuch an honour; but would in like manner be preſerved, and not conſumed by his gracious preſence: (*ſee notes, Exod.* c. iii. v. 2—4.)

Upon the head, &c.] Jacob's peculiar love to Joſeph, and his eminent wiſdom, piety, and uſefulneſs, inſpired the dying patriarch with copiouſneſs in bleſſing him, and his children: his memory was alſo dear to Iſrael, and to Moſes, who enlarged in his prophetical prayer for his deſcendants, with evident reference to Jacob's bleſſing, and under the ſame title of him, who "was ſeparated from his brethren:" (*notes, Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 15—22. c. xlix. v. 22—26.)

V. 17. *As the firſtling*, &c.] This implies that the deſcendants of Joſeph ſhould have the glory of being powerful in Iſrael, and victorious over their enemies. Joſeph, as if he had been the firſt-born, had the birth-right, and the double portion, inſtead of Reuben; Joſhua, under whom Canaan was conquered, in thoſe firſt wars of Iſrael, was of the tribe of Ephraim. Many proofs were given by theſe tribes of their courage, and they were ſignalized with much ſucceſs, (which is the meaning of his horns being like the horns of unicorns, with which they puſhed the people together, to the ends of the earth, or to extremities of the land.) They were alſo remarkable for their numbers, but in both reſpects Ephraim exceeded, as Jacob had foretold.

V. 18, 19, Zebulun, and Iſſachar, both ſons of Leah, were united in this bleſſing, and their inheritances lay together in the land. It was predicted that Zebulun would proſper, and conſequently "rejoice in his going out;" that is, ſay ſome, as a merchant, "for he was a haven of ſhips." (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 13.) And thus he ſucked the abundance "of the ſeas, and of the treaſures hid in the land;" that is, reaped as it were it's harveſt, or worked it's mines: and it might be ſo: and upon that ſuppoſition we may underſtand his "calling the people to the mountain," of the endeavours, which thoſe of this tribe would uſe in bringing thoſe foreigners, with whom they traded, acquainted with their religion: which forms an example worthy the imitation of merchants. But as the Zebulunites were ſituated, as is ſuppoſed, at ſome diſtance from the Mediterranean ſea, and upon the ſea of Tiberias, perhaps their fiſhery is more intended, than their foreign trade: and in this way the ſea yields a revenue more valuable, than the productions of mines of gold, and almoſt equal to the harveſt of the plain. Of Iſſachar it is foretold, that he ſhould proſper, and rejoice in his tents, as a ſhepherd tending his flock: (and we ought to rejoice, and be thankful to God, when we can live, and maintain our families by any honeſt employment however mean.) And probably of both Zebulun, and Iſſachar, that they would be remarkably zealous or the ordinances of God, in offering the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs, out of their juſt gains, at the temple of Jeruſalem, though they lived ſo far diſtant; and that they would uſe their influence, in inviting, perſuading, and prevailing upon others to accompany them to the mountain, on which Moſes foreſaw that the temple would be built. The firſt preaching of the goſpel by Chriſt and his apoſtles began in the lot of theſe tribes.

V. 20, 21. *And of Gad*, &c.] The increaſe of Gad is here predicted, as the immediate work of God, which was to be acknowledged with gratitude. When this tribe, in conjunction with Reuben, petitioned for a poſſeſſion eaſtward of Jordan, of the firſt fruits of Iſrael's conqueſts, and obtained it, "he provided the firſt part for himſelf, and "was ſeated in a portion of the lawgiver," that is, which Moſes, the lawgiver had allotted him. In this he afterwards dwelt as a lion; and when any of the ſurrounding nations attacked him, he not only tare their arm, enfeebling their power, but their head too, in bringing them under ſubjection, (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 19. 1 *Chron.* c. v. ver. 18—22. c. xii. v. 8.) After the Gadites were eſtabliſhed in their own ſettlements, they marched boldly with the other tribes

22 And

22 And of Dan he ſaid, Dan *is* a lion's whelp: he ſhall leap from Baſhan.

23 And of Naphtali he ſaid, O Naphtali, ſatisfied with favour, and full with the bleſſing of the LORD; poſſeſs thou the weſt and the ſouth.

24 And of Aſher he ſaid, *Let* Aſher *be* bleſſed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.

25 Thy ſhoes *ſhall be* iron and braſs; and as thy days, *ſo ſhall* thy ſtrength *be*.

26 *There is* none like unto the God of Jeſhurun, *who* rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the ſky.

27 The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlaſting arms: and he ſhall thruſt out the enemy from before thee, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy *them*.

28 Iſrael then ſhall dwell in ſafety alone: the fountain of Jacob *ſhall be* upon a land of corn and wine; alſo his heavens ſhall drop down dew.

29 Happy *art* thou, O Iſrael: who *is* like unto thee, O people ſaved by the LORD, the

croſs Jordan, along with the reſt of Iſrael, to execute the juſtice of God upon the Canaanites.

V. 22.] Jacob had compared Dan to a ſerpent, (*note*, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 16, 17.) Moſes makes the lion his emblem, when leaping from Baſhan he irreſiſtibly ſeized, and devoured his prey. In Sampſon, who was of this tribe, both theſe emblems were realized.

V. 23.] To Naphtali was here predicted much peace, and proſperity from the ſpecial favour of the Lord: and we are told, that though the lot of this tribe lay in the north part of the land, it was ſo remarkably fruitful, that they generally brought their firſt fruits, before the other tribes. The words "poſſeſs thou the weſt, and the ſouth," may be tranſlated, "poſſeſs thou the ſea on the ſouth," that is the ſea of Tiberias, which lay to the ſouth of the lot of this tribe, and would contribute much to their proſperity.

V. 24.] Aſher ſignifies bleſſed; and to him was predicted a numerous increaſe; with much love, and friendſhip from his brethren, and with moſt fruitful olive yards.

V. 25.] Some ſuppoſe that the former part of this verſe means only, that there ſhould be under his feet, or in his portion, productive mines of iron, and braſs. But it hath long been interpreted as a proverbial expreſſion: if a man were about to travel in rough roads, or to climb craggy precipices, or to be ſtationed upon a ſlippery eminence, it would be uſeful to him to have plates of iron, or braſs fixed to his ſhoes: in like manner the Lord would prepare Aſher for every difficulty, which he would meet with; and in this ſenſe, the latter clauſe is an explanation of the former, and ſignifies, that as the day of trial requires, ſtrength ſhould be communicated. A moſt precious bleſſing, or promiſe! (2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 9, 10.)

V. 26. *Upon the heaven*, &c.] Moſes added to his prophetical prayer for each tribe in particular, a declaration of the glory of God, and the happineſs of Iſrael in general; theſe were the laſt words, which are recorded that he ſpake. The God of Jeſhurun rides upon the heavens; that is he comes in glorious majeſty, and with irreſiſtible force, to defend his people, and deſtroy their enemies; and in ſo doing manifeſts all his excellencies, his wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and love in the moſt conſpicuous manner.

V. 27.] The eternity, immutability, and almighty power of God form the ſecure refuge, and the firm ſupport of his people, in all their dangers, and difficulties. Theſe would ſecure to Iſrael the conqueſt of Canaan, and enable them to execute the divine command in the deſtruction of it's inhabitants: and they would ſecure their peaceable, and proſperous poſſeſſion, ſo long as they continued obedient, and did not forfeit their national covenant.

V. 29. *Thine enemies*, &c.] Their enemies ſhould be conſtrained to diſſemble their enmity, and yield a feigned reluctant ſubmiſſion, being terrified by Iſrael's power, and ſucceſs. Thus were they a moſt happy nation, and had moſt extraordinary privileges: but by their ſin they forfeited all, and became moſt wretched. The true Iſrael of God poſſeſs all theſe bleſſings in their nobleſt ſenſe, and have them ſecured to them by ſtill better promiſes, and a better covenant.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The real miniſters of the Lord dare not flatter men in their ſins, or ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God, as far as they are able, even when that renders it neceſſary to denounce the moſt tremendous curſes againſt apoſtates, hypocrites, and other impenitent ſinners: but at the ſame time their hearts are full of the moſt compaſſionate, and tender love of them: and could they, whom their faithfulneſs exaſperates, witneſs their melting deſires, and fervent prayers in ſecret for them, it muſt abate ſomewhat of their reſentment: (*Jer.* c. xiii. v. 13—17:) nay their moſt awful warnings, which are pointed with painful, and irritating conviction to the conſciences of their hearers, are the effect of their tender concern for their eternal welfare: and they live, and die, praying earneſtly that all the bleſſings of the new covenant may be communicated even to thoſe, who have deſpitefully uſed, and perſecuted them. (*Acts*, c. vii. v. 51, 52. 54. 57—60.) The holy law of God, when fully opened in it's extent, ſpirituality, excellency, and awful ſanction; and when applied by the Holy Spirit to the ſinner's awakened conſcience, is ſtill a "fiery law;" and ſometimes occaſions alarms, no leſs diſmaying, and equally well grounded with thoſe which appalled Iſrael, when they heard it from the midſt of the fire upon mount Sinai: and how intolerable to every humbled ſoul would be the thought of being compelled to meet the Judge, at the conſummation of all things, to receive the eternal ſentence, according thereunto!—Yet in ſubſerviency to the goſpel, it is moſt uſeful to us, to ſhew us our need of a Saviour, and the nature, glory, and precioufneſs of that ſalvation: and when delivered unto us by our reconciled Father in Jeſus Chriſt, as our rule, and written in our hearts by his Spirit, as our principle of evangelical obedience, it is a peculiar

shield of thy help, and who *is* the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

effect, and evidence of the Lord's love to us, and directs us in evidencing, and expressing our love to him. These are the saints of the Lord, who, being justified by faith, have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and being secure under his fatherly protection, sit down at his feet daily to receive further instruction from his words, and with the whole congregation of Jacob, acknowledge him their king, and yield him prompt, and willing obedience; grieved only "that they cannot do the things which they "would," and are not able to serve him perfectly.—The blessings, with which the Lord blessed these tribes of the redeemed, are suited to each person's case, and are sufficient for them in every situation: and whilst every one properly feels, and is blessed of God in his appointed place in the church, every one becomes a blessing to, and receives benefit from all the rest: whether appointed to the magistracy, or ministry, or in a more private situation; or whether entrusted with wealth, or called upon to labour for his bread. They, who are employed in the sacred ministry, should be tried persons, approved of God, possessed of enlightened understandings, sound judgments, and upright hearts: who, filled with zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, in the execution of their office, respect not the persons of men, nor fear their frowns: who are superior to the allurements of covetousness, and ambition, and to every undue bias of natural affection; who desire not the advancement, or affluence of their brethren, or children; but "observing the word and keeping the "covenant of God," teach the people his truths, precepts, and ordinances with all faithfulness, and diligence, pour out their fervent prayers to the Lord, to increase their ability for the ministry, and to prosper the work of their hands; (*Psal.* xc. v. 17;) and leave it to him to provide for them, and their families after them, as well as to defend them from, and plead their cause with all that rise up against them. Such ministers should always be assisted with the daily prayers of all the Lord's people; for they greatly need, and highly value them: nor should we ever forget to unite our supplications to God, that he would by his grace render all, who are ordained to this important service, like-minded to those, whom Moses here described; and that he would send forth increasing numbers of such "labourers into his harvest; for the harvest is great, but "the *labourers* are very few;" and that he would continue such a ministry through successive generations, long after we are dead and gone, even to the latest period of time. To be situated near the lively ordinances, is a precious gift from the Lord upon his beloved; and they, who value, and improve such a privilege, will find their situation so secure, and comfortable, that they will not consent to exchange it from any inducements of temporal convenience, emolument, or indulgence. We should thankfully receive, as from the blessing of the Lord, those valuable productions, which the fruitful earth yields, through the successive seasons of the year, by the genial influences of the heavens above: but those good gifts, which come down from the Father of lights, through the rising of the sun of righteousness, and the pouring out of his Spirit like fructifying rain, as the tokens of his special love, who as the covenant God of Israel, deigned to dwell in the burning bush, are infinitely more precious; and they all belong to those, who are separated and distinguished from others, by their faith, and holiness: nor shall their memory fail of being honoured, or their posterity remain unnoticed, who have been remarkably pious, and useful in their generation. Happy are they, who through the blessing of God on any honest occupation, are not only enabled to maintain themselves, but have a heart to consecrate their gain unto the Lord; who shrink not from labour, and freely incur expence, in offering the spiritual sacrifices of righteousness, which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ: and who zealously improve every opportunity, and advantage to bring others to join with them in such a reasonable service. Having chosen, and secured, through the grace of God, "the first part "for themselves," even "that good part, which shall "never be taken from them," what can they do so becoming, and profitable, as to assist others in seeking, and obtaining the same inheritance? But in thus decidedly taking the Lord's part against his enemies, they must expect, that opposition will be made against them, and they will need to unite the boldness of the lion, the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove in their character, and conduct. However being "satisfied "with the favour, and filled with the blessing of the Lord," and "being acceptable to their brethren," and made useful to their fellow-sinners; they may well bear this reproach, and it's effects: for all shall be sanctified unto the true believer, and if their way be rough, their feet shall be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and their strength in every case proportioned to the emergency. But indeed no words can express the glorious excellencies of the God of Jeshurun, or the privileges, and felicity of his believing people. The righteousness, whereby they are justified, is an everlasting righteousness, and their salvation shall be for ever: being united unto Jesus Christ by a living faith, and the communication of his Holy Spirit, they are already "saved in the Lord:" they are his own children, and the eternal God is their present refuge; his everlasting arms form their unfailing support; all his perfections are engaged in their behalf; he will hasten to their assistance with invincible force, whenever their enemies assault them, and silence all the accusations of their malicious slanderers; he will guard their peace, and character, as well as the life of their souls; he will choose their inheritance for them, and put them in possession of it: there shall they dwell alone, when their inward foes shall all be slain; and the devil, and his angels, and servants driven away into everlasting punishment. There shall they be filled with the love of their God and Saviour towards them, and be perfected in their love to him, and to each other, and all their employment shall be praise, and grateful adoration: there will the felicity of every happy inhabitant reciprocally enhance that of all the rest; nor shall any emulation remain, but which shall most love, and glorify the supreme object of their united affections, and adoration, and the source of all their joys. God help us to seek, and set our affections on these things, which are above, and to detach our souls from earthly, polluted, perishing objects. That we may not

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. Moſes aſcending the mountain, and ſurveying the promiſed land, v. 1—4. *2d. His death, burial, and age, and Iſrael's mourning for him, v.* 5—8. *3d. Joſhua's wiſdom, and ſucceſſion, with an acknowledgment, that no prophet like unto Moſes had ariſen in Iſrael, v.* 9—12.

AND Moſes went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Piſgah, that *is* over againſt Jericho: and the LORD ſhewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manaſſeh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmoſt ſea,

3 And the ſouth, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

4 And the LORD ſaid unto him, This *is* the land which I ſware unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, ſaying, I will give it unto thy ſeed: I have cauſed thee to ſee *it* with thine eyes, but thou ſhalt not go over thither.

5 So Moſes the ſervant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over againſt Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his ſepulchre unto this day.

7 And Moſes *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

8 And the children of Iſrael wept for Moſes in the plains of Moab thirty days: ſo the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moſes were ended.

9 And Joſhua the ſon of Nun was full of the ſpirit of wiſdom; for Moſes had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Iſrael hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moſes.

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have our lot with Iſrael's foes in the regions of darkneſs, and deſpair; but with the Iſrael of God in the realms of love, and bliſs ineffable.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *And Moſes*, &c.] The laſt chapter cloſed the words, and writings of Moſes, and this chapter muſt have been added by ſome other hand; but whether by Joſhua, or by Samuel, or ſome later prophet, is not agreed: perhaps the laſt verſes were added as late as the days of Ezra, after the captivity: but it is not material, the author is the ſame, though he was pleaſed to change his amanuenſis. Moſes appeared reluctant to leave his work, but that being finiſhed, he manifeſted no unwillingneſs to die. He was now brought to acquieſce in the Lord's refuſal to him of an entrance into Canaan, and appears to have been animated with the immediate proſpect of glory, looſening all earthly attachments, and adding to his ſtrength, and ſpirits in aſcending the mountain, where he was to put off the tabernacle of his body: and it ſeems probable that he aſcended, and died without a witneſs of, or companion to cloſe his eyes in death. His mounting upward to die might intimate that the believer's dropping the body is the ſoul's enlargement, and aſcenſion to glory. Abarim (ch. xxxii. v. 49,) is ſuppoſed to be a ridge of mountains, Nebo the higheſt mountain in that ridge, and Piſgah the ſummit of that mountain.

And the Lord ſhewed him, &c.] His ſight was miraculouſly aſſiſted in taking a diſtinct, and deliberate view of the promiſed land, as it was afterwards divided amongſt the tribes of Iſrael: this view would not only gratify Moſes, in his endeared affection for the people; but was a type of thoſe views of glory, which reconcile the believer to diſſolution.

V. 5. *According to*, &c.] As a true ſervant of the Lord he was obedient unto death, and as willingly obeyed this as any foregoing command of God, though it ſeemed harder. In this he reſembled Jeſus Chriſt: but he died in honour, in peace, and in the moſt eaſy manner; the Saviour upon the ignominious, and torturing croſs!

V. 6. *He buried him*, &c.] Perhaps by the miniſtration of angels, but not by any human help, the Lord buried the body of Moſes, and concealed it from the Iſraelites, that it might not be an occaſion to them of ſuperſtition, and idolatry: and as they were not able to venerate the reliques of their law giver, they never were guilty, that we find, of that ſpecies of ſuperſtition, which hath ſo long diſgraced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity: (*Jude*, v. 9.) When Moſes died the Lord buried him; but when Chriſt died, he was raiſed from the dead; for the Moſaic diſpenſation was to be ſuperſeded by the Chriſtian, which is to endure to the end of time.

V. 7. *And Moſes*, &c.] The life of Moſes was remarkably divided into three forty years, the firſt in the rank of a courtier, the ſecond as a ſhepherd in the wilderneſs, and the third as a law giver, and king in Jeſhurun But though he lived ſo much longer than the moſt of his cotemporaries, (*Pſalm*, xc. v. 10,) he had experienced no failure in his faculties, or ſenſes; but died, not by the courſe of nature, but according to the will of God, when his work was finiſhed. Thus alſo Chriſt died in the vigour of life. Some ſuppoſe that the ſhining of Moſes' face alſo continued to his death.

V. 8. *Wept for Moſes*, &c.] They not only paid him the cuſtomary honour: but after his death became ſenſible of their loſs; and perhaps even thoſe ſincerely lamented him, who had ſpoken of ſtoning him, when he had oppoſed their luſts.

10 And there aroſe not a prophet ſince in Iſrael like unto Moſes, whom the LORD knew face to face;

11 In all the ſigns and the wonders which the LORD ſent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his ſervants, and to all his land,

12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moſes ſhewed in the ſight of all Iſrael.

V. 10. *There aroſe not*, &c.] To the time of the perſon who inſerted theſe verſes, no prophet had ariſen in all reſpects qualified and honoured of God, as Moſes had been; nor did any one ariſe until the coming of Chriſt; who exceeded him, as the Son doth the ſervant; and not only was known of the Father face to face, but came forth from the boſom of the Father, to reveal him, and his truth, and ſalvation to ſinful men.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt ere long be called into the eternal world; our wiſdom and happineſs therefore conſiſt in habitual readineſs for, and expectation of that ſolemn event: and if our hearts have experienced the ſalvation of God, we are prepared, and ſhould be willing to depart in peace, whenever it pleaſes him. To ſtand with our loins girded, diligently doing our proper work, and waiting the ſummons of the Lord, will beſt enſure thoſe views of heavenly reſt, and thoſe foretaſtes of joy which gild the proſpect, and chear the heart of believers in paſſing that laſt gloomy vale. Nor need we be anxious about the preſence of beloved relatives, or the ſolace of the Lord's people, or miniſters, in our dying moments; even ſhould our departure be ſudden, alone, or amongſt ſtrangers, the love and preſence of the Lord will ſupply all that we need deſire. Nor ought we to be anxious where our bones ſhall be diſpoſed of in God's providence: the burial of Chriſt hath conſecrated every ſpot where a believer is interred, and his omnipotent voice will at length raiſe us incorruptible. But we ſhould fear leaving any occaſion of ſin to the ſurvivors, after our deceaſe; for the enmity and envy that follow the Lord's ſervants whilſt they live, are frequently changed into ſuperſtitious regard for them after their death; and even their miſtakes will then be eſpouſed, and their failings imitated: and many eminent ſaints, now in glory, could they again reviſit this lower world, would embrace that opportunity of burying, or burning, or expunging ſome paſſages out of writings which they have left behind, perhaps without intention of being made public, which ſatan hath afterwards made uſe of as an handle againſt ſome part of divine truth, far beſide the intention of the writer, yet under the venerable ſanction of his eſtabliſhed reputation. It behoves them therefore to be as cautious in this reſpect, as the Lord was in concealing the body of Moſes. Whilſt reſpect is paid to the memory of the deceaſed, the living ſervants of God ſhould not be undervalued: for though in ſome reſpects inferior to their predeceſſors, God will qualify them for their work; and his authority ſhould be honoured in them; and the meaſure of wiſdom and holineſs which he has given them, ſhould be eſteemed and regarded. And as Jeſus ever liveth to take care of his own cauſe, we need not mourn for the moſt eminent men, as thoſe who have no hope, that the loſs ſhould be made up to the church of God.

Thus have we been carried through this diviſion of the ſacred Scripture: may the Lord pardon all that hath been faulty, and prevent every i'l effect, if any thing erroneous hath been advanced! and if uſefulneſs hath been conferred on any part thereof, may he have all the praiſe. With truth and gratitude the writer can ſay, that his labour hath been pleaſant, and profitable to his own ſoul; and he would continue to beg the reader's inceſſant prayers, for further aſſiſtance in the remaining part of the arduous and important undertaking: that freſh light may ſhine into his mind, and upon the ſubject, as the work proceeds; and that ere it come to a cloſe, ſomewhat leſs unworthy of the public notice, and more fitted for real uſefulneſs, may through him be communicated to the church of God.

THE

THE BOOK OF
JOSHUA.

It is not certain who was the penman of this Book; but it is moſt probable, that the ſubſtance of it was written by him, whoſe name it bears, though ſeveral paſſages appear to have been added after Joſhua's deceaſe; perhaps by Phinehas, or ſome other perſon, who was employed in connecting the memorials, which he left behind him. Therein is contained the hiſtory of Iſrael's paſſing over into the land of Canaan, and conquering, and dividing it, under the command of Joſhua; and their conſequent hiſtory until his death: but how long that event was poſterior to the death of Moſes is not eaſily aſcertained; perhaps not more than ſixteen or ſeventeen years. The power, and truth of God in fulfilling his promiſes to Iſrael, and in executing his threatened vengeance upon the Canaanites, are therein wonderfully diſplayed: which ſhould teach every reader to expect the accompliſhment of the moſt tremendous curſes in the word of God upon impenitent ſinners, and to ſeek refuge in Chriſt Jeſus; and every believer to wait patiently in the path of duty, for the performance of his largeſt and kindeſt promiſes; and confidently to expect it, notwithſtanding difficulties, and delays. We ſhall alſo meet in this hiſtory with many things worthy of our imitation; and ſome things, which we muſt cenſure and ſhun. Inſtructive proofs of the power, and triumphs of faith will throughout attract our attention; and many typical references to Chriſt, and the goſpel, eſpecially in the character, and public ſervices of Joſhua, will excite a grateful recollection in the believer's mind: whilſt the cloſing admonitions, and exhortations are as applicable to us, as ever they were to Iſrael.

Before Chriſt 1451.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua confirmed, and encouraged of the Lord, in his ſucceſſion to Moſes, v. 1—9. 2d. Entering upon his charge, and giving orders relative to the paſſage of Iſrael over Jordan, v. 10—15. 3d. Recognized as their commander by the people, with promiſes of ſubjection, and obedience, v. 16—18.

NOW after the death of Moſes the ſervant of the LORD, it came to paſs, that the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua the ſon of Nun, Moſes' miniſter, ſaying,

Before Chriſt 1451.

2 Moſes my ſervant is dead; now therefore ariſe, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Iſrael.

3 Every place that the ſole of your foot ſhall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I ſaid unto Moſes.

4 From the wilderneſs and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great ſea toward the going down of the ſun, ſhall be your coaſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 2. *Ariſe, go over,* &c.] It is not likely that the Iſraelites paſſed over Jordan, before the thirty days of mourning were expired: but this encouraging viſit of the Lord to Joſhua might be previous thereto, as alſo the ſending out of the ſpies. (c. ii. v. 1.) The Moſaic diſpenſation was in roductory to that of the goſpel, and muſt expire, before that could appear in it's full glory: the moral law is exceedingly uſeful to the church of God, and to every believer; but only the goſpel can conduct him to the heavenly inheritance; and until we are dead to the law, as to any dependance on it, or expectation from it, in the concern of juſtification, we cannot be eſtabliſhed in our privileges as believers in Chriſt. Theſe things are ſhadowed forth in this typical tranſaction of Moſes' death, ere Joſhua (that is Jeſus) could lead the tribes of Iſrael to Canaan's reſt.

V. 4. *The river Euphrates,* &c.] In the times of David, and Solomon, the nation of Iſrael poſſeſſed, or ruled

5 There ſhall not any man be able to ſtand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moſes, *ſo* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee.

6 Be ſtrong and of a good courage; for unto this people ſhalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I ſware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou ſtrong, and very courageous, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do according to all the law which Moſes my ſervant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayeſt proſper whitherſoever thou goeſt.

8 This book of the law ſhall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou ſhalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou ſhalt make thy way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good ſucceſs.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be ſtrong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou diſmayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.

10 Then Joſhua commanded the officers of the people, ſaying,

11 Paſs through the hoſt, and command the people, ſaying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye ſhall paſs over this Jordan, to go in to poſſeſs the land which the LORD your God giveth you to poſſeſs it.

12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manaſſeh, ſpake Joſhua, ſaying,

13 Remember the word which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD commanded you, ſaying, The LORD your God hath given you reſt, and hath given you this land.

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, ſhall remain in the land which Moſes gave you on this ſide Jordan; but ye ſhall paſs before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them,

15 Until the LORD hath given your brethren reſt, as *he hath given* you, and they alſo have poſſeſſed the land which the LORD your God giveth them; then ye ſhall return unto the land of your poſſeſſion, and enjoy it, which Moſes the LORD's ſervant gave you on this ſide Jordan, toward the ſun-riſing.

16 And they anſwered Joſhua, ſaying, All that thou commandeſt us we will do, and whitherſoever thou ſendeſt us we will go.

17 According as we hearkened unto Moſes in all things, ſo will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moſes.

18 Whoſoever *he be* that doth rebel againſt

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over all thoſe countries, which are mentioned in this grant, or nearly. But in general, by reaſon of their ſin, they attained not to the enjoyment of all the proſperity, which was engaged to them *conditionally* in their national covenant. And though Chriſtians are under a better covenant, ſecured by better promiſes, yet very few, if any of them, live in this world in the actual enjoyment of all that peace, and conſolation, that is contained in the promiſe; and this is the effect of their remaining unbelief, ſloth, and attachment to the world.

V. 5. *I will not fail*, &c.] The application of this promiſe by the apoſtle, (*Heb.* c. xiii. v. 5, 6,) encourages us to expect the performance of every promiſe in the Scripture to ourſelves; if we are real Chriſtians, and walking in the Lord's ways, and if they ſuit our caſe, and if their accompliſhment would conduce to our real advantage.

V. 7. *That thou mayeſt*, &c.] As the ſucceſſor of ſo eminent a ſervant of God, as Moſes, as ruler over ſo numerous, and untractable a people, as Iſrael; and as employed in ſo perilous an undertaking, as the conqueſt of Canaan, much of the ſtrength of grace, and courage of faith would be needful to Joſhua; that he might perſevere in the path of duty, unmoved by terrors, difficulties, or perſuaſions, and neither turn to the right hand, or to the left.

V. 8. *This book*, &c.] By conſtant meditation the good treaſure of God's word was to be depoſited in his heart; that from that abundance his mouth might ſpeak, as occaſion required, for the people's conviction, direction, or encouragement.

V. 11. *Prepare you victuals*, &c.] The manna had not yet ceaſed to fall; but they probably had uſed more of other proviſion, after they had taken poſſeſſion of the kingdoms of Sihon, and Og. And the words in general may mean, prepare all things neceſſary for the expedition. This ſeems to have been commanded after the return of the ſpies, as recorded in the ſubſequent chapter, who were abſent from them more than three days.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The removal of thoſe, who have been faithful, and uſeful in their generation, ſhould quicken their ſurvivors to double earneſtneſs, and activity; both to make up, as much as in them lieth, the public loſs, and to prepare for their own diſſolution. (*Eccleſ.* c. ix. v. 10.) Every one of the Lord's ſervants having performed the work aſſigned them, retire to reſt, and others are raiſed up to ſucceed thy

thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandeſt him, he ſhall be put to death: only be ſtrong, and of a good courage.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. Two ſpies ſent by Joſhua, entering Jericho, protected by Rahab, and informed of the terror which had ſeized the Canaanites, v. 1—11. 2d. Her agreement with them for her own ſafety, and that of her friends, v. 12—21. 3d. Their preſervation, return, and report to Joſhua, v. 22—24.

AND Joſhua the ſon of Nun ſent out of Shittim two men, to ſpy ſecretly, ſaying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's houſe named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And it was told the king of Jericho, ſaying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Iſrael, to ſearch out the country.

3 And the king of Jericho ſent unto Rahab, ſaying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine houſe: for they be come to ſearch out all the country.

4 And the woman took the two men, and

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them, until their ſervices alſo are finiſhed: and generally, they who have in the cloſe of life been moſt honoured, have been previouſly ſubmiſſive, and diligent in a more obſcure ſituation. No conſciouſneſs of inferiority, of inſufficiency, or even of unworthineſs, ſhould induce us to decline the ſervice, which is allotted to us; for the ſame fulneſs, whence prophets, and apoſtles received all their ſufficiency, is open for us alſo; and in our more limited ſpheres, and for our leſſer ſervices, we have a warrant to expect, that the Lord will be with us, as he was with Moſes, or Paul; tho' we muſt not imagine that he will ſpeak to us face to face, or give us a viſion of the third heavens, and thoſe unutterable things, which are there diſplayed. Nor ought we to fear any oppoſition, or difficulty, whilſt the promiſes of God are in our hands, and we have received faith to embrace them, and a heart to plead them in prayer. That man has need to be ſtrong in faith, and very courageous, who in this evil world would do his whole duty, and not turn aſide to the right hand, or to the left, on account of any temptation, or through fear of any conſequence whatſoever: but when the Lord commands us to be ſtrong, and courageous, we ſhould conſider the precept, as a memento, to cry earneſtly to him that he may give us all neceſſary ſtrength and courage; and in this dependance we may go forth aſſured that nothing can ſtand before, or impede our courſe; for the Lord will not fail us, nor forſake us.—But warranted confidence is always connected with proportionable humility, and conſcientiouſneſs: and genuine courage chiefly appears in daring to do our duty, though cenſured by miſjudging friends, or threatened by malicious enemies. And that we may be ſecured from deception, and be aſſured that we are reproached or perſecuted, not for following our own fancies, but for obeying God's commands, we muſt endeavour by daily meditation, and prayer, to obtain that digeſted acquaintance with the precepts, as well as the promiſes of God's word, which may render our path of duty evident to our own minds, and enable us to explain our reaſons, and motives ſatisfactorily to the candid, and pious, when occaſion requires. Then will our hearts be encouraged in every circumſtance; and he, whoſe commands we are attempting to obey, will effectually ſupport us, and perhaps will influence the hearts of thoſe to favour us, who once were our enemies. However when we act by his commiſſion, and according to his inſtructions, he will find us all needful aſſiſtance: and when perſons of different ranks, and in due ſubordination, harmoniouſly concur in endeavours to promote the welfare of the church, and with one accord ſeek the preſence, and bleſſing of the Lord therein, the proſpect of ſucceſs is very pleaſing; and they who oppoſe ſuch efforts merit the ſevereſt puniſhment. May the Lord help us then to truſt in him; to ſubmit to thoſe, whom he hath placed over us, and to aſſiſt them with our prayers, and in every way that we are able; and to be helpful to one another in the moſt diſintereſted manner, and with the moſt exact punctuality to our engagements! And eſpecially may he enable us to ſubmit to the authority, and enliſt under the banner of the Captain of our ſalvation; and to be obedient to his commands, and to fight the good fight of faith, in concurrence with all that truſt in and love his name, and in oppoſition to all within and without, which oppoſe his authority. For whoever refuſes to obey him muſt inevitably be deſtroyed from amongſt his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1.] We have no reaſon to charge Joſhua with timidity or diſtruſt in this tranſaction. It might be very uſeful to him, as commander, to learn many things reſpecting the ſituation of Jericho, and the diſpoſition of its inhabitants, which might be known by ordinary means, as well as by immediate revelation. The ſpies were only two, not men of eminent rank, but of approved intrepidity and faith, ſent by Joſhua to ſearch out Jericho and its confines, and to bring their report to him, and not to the congregation. Probably it was done by divine intimation, as they were evidently guided and protected in a remarkaable manner, and many important good conſequences reſulted from their enterprize.

An harlot's houſe, &c.] There can be no doubt but this woman had been an harlot; but probably ſhe had before this altered her courſe of life: and as ſhe was afterwards married to a prince in Iſrael, and ſo brought into the line of the Meſſiah, ſhe could not have been very old at this time. Though it is probable that ſhe kept an houſe of entertainment for travellers, from her alledging, that two men had indeed come to her, of whom ſhe knew nothing; yet it is evident, from the whole narrative, that the ſpies were led thither by the ſpecial providence of God, and that ſhe entertained them out of regard to Iſrael and Iſrael's God, and neither for lucre, or for any evil purpoſe.

V. 4. *And hid them*, &c.] Theſe words might be ren-

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hid them, and ſaid thus, There came men unto me, but I wiſt not whence they *were*.

5 And it came to paſs *about the time* of ſhutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not: purſue after them quickly; for ye ſhall overtake them.

6 But ſhe had brought them up to the roof of the houſe, and hid them with the ſtalks of flax which ſhe had laid in order upon the roof.

7 And the men purſued after them the way to Jordan, unto the fords: and as ſoon as they which purſued after them were gone out, they ſhut the gate.

8 And before they were laid down, ſhe came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And ſhe ſaid unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint becauſe of you.

10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red ſea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly deſtroyed.

11 And as ſoon as we had heard *theſe things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, becauſe of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore I pray you, ſwear unto me by the LORD, ſince I have ſhewed you kindneſs, that ye will alſo ſhew kindneſs unto my father's houſe; and give me a true token:

13 And *that* ye will ſave alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my ſiſters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

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dered, "had hid them." It is evident, that Rahab was acquainted with their buſineſs, before ſhe received the meſſage from the king; and ſenſible of the danger to which they would be expoſed, when every one was upon the watch, being acquainted with the ſituation and purpoſes of Iſrael, ſhe had previouſly concealed them. It has been much conteſted, whether Rahab ſinned in the anſwer which ſhe returned to the meſſengers, and in her manner of conducting this buſineſs. Some think her treachery to her king and country cannot be vindicated: but as ſhe was influenced "by faith" in the whole tranſaction, (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 31,) and firmly believed, that the God of heaven had devoted the Canaanites to be utterly deſtroyed by the Iſraelites, ſhe muſt either have ſided with Iſrael, and Iſrael's God, againſt her country, or have periſhed with it, in a hopeleſs conteſt with the Almighty: in this caſe ſhe would have proved, that her faith was dead and uſeleſs; therefore in her circumſtances ſhe could not act otherwiſe, if ſhe poſſeſſed true and living faith, (*James*, c. ii. v. 26.) Every one, who is truly converted, equally renounces the alliance of the Lord's enemies, however nearly connected, and muſt refuſe to join with them in their rebellion againſt God, and their perſecution of his ſervants. But as no nation can poſſibly produce ſuch an authenticated commiſſion from God to deſtroy another nation, as Iſrael had to deſtroy the Canaanites: ſo Rahab's conduct in uniting intereſts with the enemies and invaders of her country, though it was her abſolute duty, cannot now be drawn into precedent. In reſpect of the falſehood which ſhe uttered, were not a general queſtion of ſome importance, and of great difficulty, involved in it, it were moſt obvious to reſolve it into her ignorance of the divine law; and to ſay, that the principle and ſubſtance of her conduct, being good, were accepted, and that the ſin which incidentally mixed with it, was pardoned. But if it were her indiſpenſable duty to protect the ſpies, and there were no other conceivable way of doing it, it ſeems not abſolutely neceſſary to condemn her conduct *in toto*. (2 *Sam.* c. xvi. v. 18, 19. c. xvii. v. 20. 2 *Kings*, c. vi. v. 19.) Stratagems of war, and other impoſitions upon determined enemies and perſecutors, are not abſolutely condemned in Scripture, though not conſiſtent with exact veracity. And if deception could in any caſe be juſtifiable, we can ſcarce imagine one in which it would be more ſo, than this was. This however is certain, that in no caſe, except one equally extraordinary, ought this example to be imitated. Her acknowledgment, that two men had come to her, gave credit to her latter aſſertion: and her apparent earneſtneſs to have them apprehended, prevented ſuſpicion, and tended to ſend the purſuers out of the way.

V. 7. *Unto the fords*, &c.] By theſe fords the ſpies had probably paſſed the river, and afterwards returned the ſame way, though they were not proper for the paſſage of the whole multitude of the Iſraelites, eſpecially when Jordan overflowed its banks, (chap. iii. v. 15.)

V. 8—13.] We have here Rahab's faith, and its fruits, which are highly celebrated in the New Teſtament, and muſt be briefly conſidered. She had heard of the miracles that God had wrought for, and the promiſes that he had made to Iſrael; and whilſt the ſame report exaſperated or intimidated the other inhabitants of the land, ſhe was led to believe, that Jehovah was the only true God, in heaven, and earth; and that the Iſraelites were his only accepted worſhippers; that his promiſes would certainly be fulfilled, and his threatenings take effect; and that there was no way of eſcape, but by reconciliation to him, and uniting intereſts with his people. Of all theſe truths, Balaam ſeems to have been convinced in his judgment, as well as to have profeſſed them with his lips; tho' his ambitious, and covetous *heart* abhorred them, and he perſiſted in his enmity to God, and Iſrael unto his death. But the conduct of Rahab proved, that ſhe had the genuine principle of divine faith,

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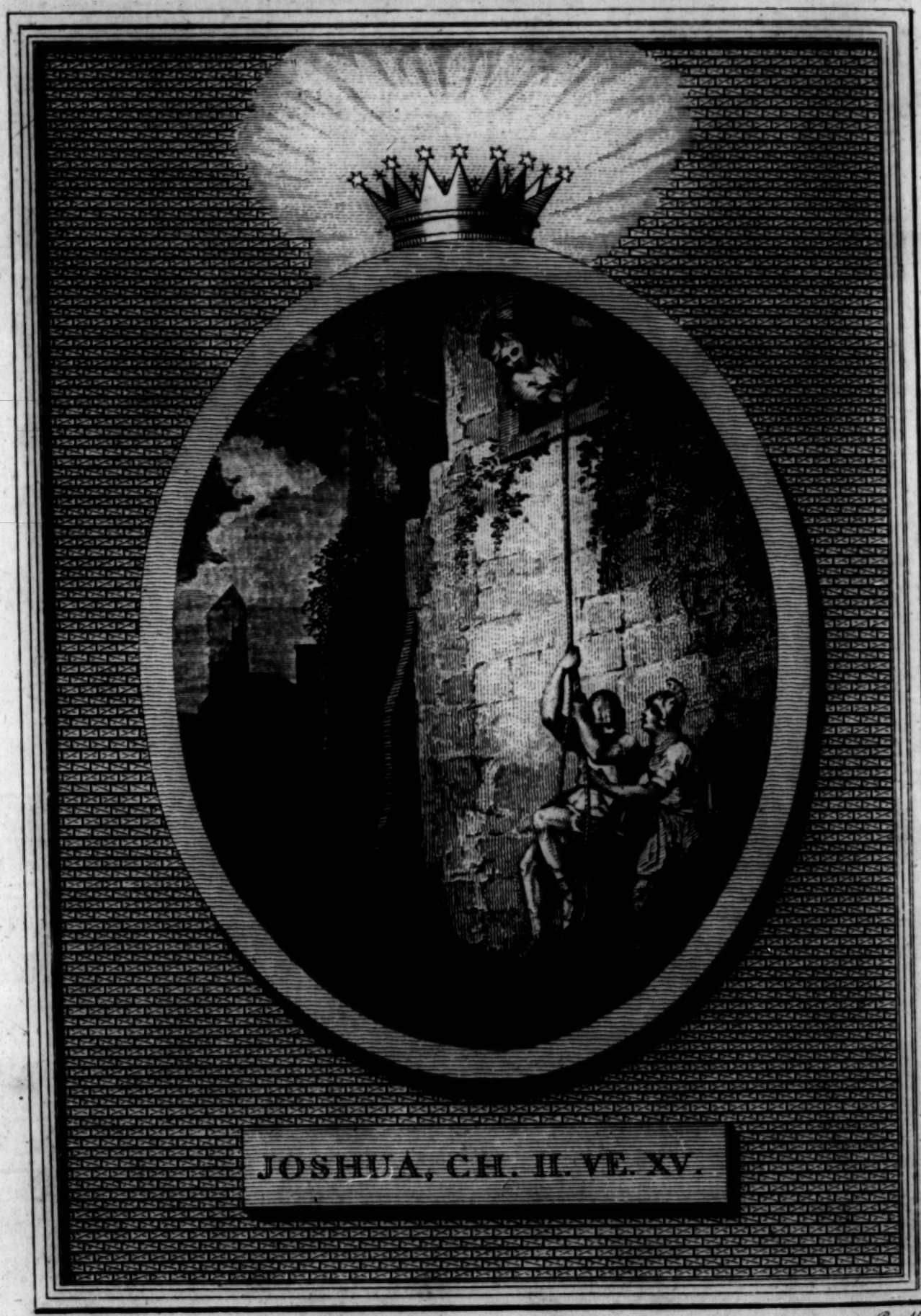

JOSHUA, CH. II. VE. XV.

Richter del. Reynolds exc

Pubd as the Act directs by Bellamy & Roberts, Dover 1788.

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14 And the men anſwered her, Our life for your's, if ye utter not this our buſineſs. And it ſhall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then ſhe let them down by a cord through the window: for her houſe *was* upon the town-wall, and ſhe dwelt upon the wall.

16 And ſhe ſaid unto them, Get ye to the mountain, leſt the purſuers meet you; and hide yourſelves there three days, until the purſuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17 And the men ſaid unto her, We *will be* blameleſs of this thine oath which thou haſt made us ſwear.

18 Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou ſhalt bind this line of ſcarlet thread in the window which thou didſt let us down by: and thou ſhalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's houſehold, home unto thee.

19 And it ſhall be, *that* whoſoever ſhall go out of the doors of thy houſe into the ſtreet, his blood *ſhall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltleſs: and whoſoever ſhall be with thee in the houſe, his blood *ſhall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.

20 And if thou utter this our buſineſs, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou haſt made us to ſwear.

21 And ſhe ſaid, According unto your words ſo *be* it. And ſhe ſent them away, and they departed: and ſhe bound the ſcarlet line in the window.

22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the purſuers were returned. And the purſuers ſought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

23 So the two men returned, and deſcended from the mountain, and paſſed over, and came to Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and told him all *things* that befel them.

24 And they ſaid unto Joſhua, Truly the

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which would diſpoſe her to receive further information concerning the Meſſias, and the way of acceptance through thoſe ſacrifices, which typified his atonement, when proper inſtruction was afforded her. By that faith, which ſhe had already received, ſhe renounced all her intereſts amongſt, and connexion with the devoted Canaanites; and ſhe ventured her life, and expoſed herſelf to the imminent danger of the moſt cruel tortures, in expreſſing her love for the people of God; without aſking any other recompenſe, than preſervation for herſelf and her near relations, when the word of God received it's expected accompliſhment. That very regard to her relatives, who were not ſenſible of their own danger, was a genuine effect of true grace: ſhe gave the ſpies alſo all the information, which ſhe could, and all, that they wanted; and ſhe deemed the ſolemn oath of Jehovah a ſufficient ſecurity for the performance of their engagements. When with great attention, hazard, and trouble ſhe had diſmiſſed them with proper counſel, ſhe performed her promiſe of ſecrecy; and at the appointed time collected her relatives into her houſe, as had been agreed: and thus without reſerve joined intereſts with the people of God: (*Ruth*, c. i. v. 15—18.) The whole of her conduct manifeſted a reverential fear of the Lord, an entire belief of his word, a deſire, and hope of his favour, an affection for his people, and a diſpoſition to forſake, venture, and ſuffer any thing for his ſake. Multitudes, who had ſeen all the Lord's miracles, and had had every advantage of inſtruction in the camp of Iſrael, continued unbelievers; very few indeed manifeſted ſuch ſtrong faith, ſuch holy fear, ſuch confidence in God, and ſuch a diſpoſition to labour, and ſuffer for his ſake, as the inhabitant of accurſed Jericho, who had only heard a vague report of the wonderful works of the Lord for Iſrael. With theſe things in our minds we ca not doubt, but her faith had before this been accompanied with repentance, and the forſaking of thoſe ſinful practices, from which ſhe derived the name of "the harlot;" which yet is given her, where her faith, and works are moſt celebrated, as illuſtrating the great evangelical truth, "that where ſin "hath abounded, grace much more aboundeth."

17. *We will be blameleſs*, &c.] As men, who reverenced an oath, and dreaded the guilt of perjury, they deſired to have the terms of the agreement, to which they acceded in the name of Iſrael, preciſely ſtated, and exactly explained.

V. 18, 19.] That houſe, which had protected the ſpies of Iſrael, was ſelected as the refuge of thoſe, who were found in it, when others were utterly deſtroyed. Though the Iſraelites were forbidden to form any alliance with the nations of Canaan; yet individuals, who came cordially into their intereſts, might be ſpared, eſpecially in requital of ſpecial favours ſhewn them. This paſſage reminds us of the blood-beſprinkled door, which was the ſecurity, when the deſtroying angel was ſlaying the firſt-born of Egypt. And both of them call to our remembrance the ſinner's ſecurity under the protection of the atoning blood; having fled thereto for refuge, from the wrath, and curſe of an offended God.

V. 23. *So the two men*, &c.] Having been thus wonderfully protected, and reſtored in ſafety, the ſpies make no mention of the ſtrict watch, which was kept by the inhabitants of Jericho, nor of their narrow eſcape: But reported the diſmay of their enemies; not only as an encouraging circumſtance, but as a token that the Lord had delivered them into their hands, having thus begun

FOR THE REVD MR SCOTT's BIBLE.

JOSHUA, CH. II. VE. XV.

Richter del.

Reynolds sc.

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14 And the men answered her, Our life for your's, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house *was* upon the town-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

16 And she said unto them, Get ye to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17 And the men said unto her, We *will be* blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

18 Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

19 And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.

20 And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

21 And she said, According unto your words so *be* it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned. And the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befel them.

24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the

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which would dispose her to receive further information concerning the Messias, and the way of acceptance through those sacrifices, which typified his atonement, when proper instruction was afforded her. By that faith, which she had already received, she renounced all her interests amongst, and connexion with the devoted Canaanites; and she ventured her life, and exposed herself to the imminent danger of the most cruel tortures, in expressing her love for the people of God; without asking any other recompense, than preservation for herself and her near relations, when the word of God received it's expected accomplishment. That very regard to her relatives, who were not sensible of their own danger, was a genuine effect of true grace: she gave the spies also all the information, which she could, and all, that they wanted; and she deemed the solemn oath of Jehovah a sufficient security for the performance of their engagements. When with great attention, hazard, and trouble she had dismissed them with proper counsel, she performed her promise of secrecy; and at the appointed time collected her relatives into her house, as had been agreed: and thus without reserve joined interests with the people of God: (*Ruth*, c. i. v. 15—18.) The whole of her conduct manifested a reverential fear of the Lord, an entire belief of his word, a desire, and hope of his favour, an affection for his people, and a disposition to forsake, venture, and suffer any thing for his sake. Multitudes, who had seen all the Lord's miracles, and had had every advantage of instruction in the camp of Israel, continued unbelievers; very few indeed manifested such strong faith, such holy fear, such confidence in God, and such a disposition to labour, and suffer for his sake, as the inhabitant of accursed Jericho, who had only heard a vague report of the wonderful works of the Lord for Israel. With these things in our minds we ca not doubt, but her faith had before this been accompanied with repentance, and the forsaking of those sinful practices, from which she derived the name of "the harlot;" which yet is given her, where her faith, and works are most celebrated, as illustrating the great evangelical truth, "that where sin "hath abounded, grace much more aboundeth."

17. *We will be blameless*, &c.] As men, who reverenced an oath, and dreaded the guilt of perjury, they desired to have the terms of the agreement, to which they acceded in the name of Israel, precisely stated, and exactly explained.

V. 18, 19.] That house, which had protected the spies of Israel, was selected as the refuge of those, who were found in it, when others were utterly destroyed. Though the Israelites were forbidden to form any alliance with the nations of Canaan; yet individuals, who came cordially into their interests, might be spared, especially in requital of special favours shewn them. This passage reminds us of the blood-besprinkled door, which was the security, when the destroying angel was slaying the first-born of Egypt. And both of them call to our remembrance the sinner's security under the protection of the atoning blood; having fled thereto for refuge, from the wrath, and curse of an offended God.

V. 23. *So the two men*, &c.] Having been thus wonderfully protected, and restored in safety, the spies make no mention of the strict watch, which was kept by the inhabitants of Jericho, nor of their narrow escape: But reported the dismay of their enemies; not only as an encouraging circumstance, but as a token that the Lord had delivered them into their hands, having thus begun

LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint becauſe of us.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1ſt. Orders given, and preparation made for Iſrael's paſſage over Jordan, v. 1—6. 2d. The Lord encouraging, and directing Joſhua, and Joſhua the people with relation thereto, v. 7—13. 3d. At the approach of the prieſt's bearing the ark, the waters of Jordan divided; and whilſt they ſtood in the midſt, the whole multitude paſſing over, v. 14—17.

AND Joſhua roſe early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Iſrael, and lodged there before they paſſed over.

2 And it came to paſs after three days, that the officers went through the hoſt;

to perform his promiſes in that behalf. (*Deut.* c. xi. v. 25.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the greateſt, wiſeſt, and beſt of men muſt on many occaſions make uſe, as it were, of the eyes, and ears of others, it is of vaſt importance, that thoſe ſhould be ſelected, whoſe veracity, and fidelity may be depended on. The Lord hath "a remnant according to the election of grace," in many unlikely ſituations, and of ſuch, who have *previouſly* born very bad characters; for he will glorify his mercy, and grace, in ſaving ſome ſinners of every kind. The reproach of former ſins, which reſts upon the reputation of atrocious offenders, after they are pardoned, ought to be patiently ſubmitted to, and they ſhould thence take occaſion to renew their repentance; and to pour out their earneſt prayers, that their future conduct may both demonſtrate the reality, and illuſtrate the nature of that grace, which they have received: that thoſe may be aſhamed, who perſiſt in reviling them; and that many may glorify God on their account, be edified by their example, and encouraged by witneſſing their good converſation in Chriſt. The feebleſt means, when accompanied by the divine bleſſing, will produce moſt glorious effects: whilſt the carnal heart will be hardened in infidelity under the moſt concluſive evidence, and the moſt convincing miniſtry of the word. When the worſt of ſinners are brought to believe the word of God, a change will infallibly take place; and that faith will produce a fear of wrath, a deſire of eſcape, a hope of mercy, a reverence of the name and authority of the Lord, and a love to him and his people, manifeſted by ſuch means, as they have opportunity, and ability to perform. They will be ſure to repent of, and forſake known ſin; to renounce worldly intereſts, and connexions, when the neceſſity of ſo doing is perceived; and to unite intereſts with the people of God: they will be induced to ſelf denial, and to take up their croſs, and to venture perſecution, and even death itſelf, rather than to give up their hope, and purſuit of ſalvation. Such perſons may at firſt have ſmall explicit knowledge of divine truth; and much infirmity, and many miſtakes may mix with their endeavours to obey God, and ſerve his people; but their conduct will be conſcientious, and their diſpoſition teachable, and their light will increaſe continually: and no faith, which produces not ſuch fruits of obedience, and good works, will juſtify the ſinner's perſon before God, or his profeſſion before his fellow creatures. When we really diſcover the danger, to which our ſouls are expoſed, from the wrath of an offended God, and are earneſtly ſeeking the aſſurance of ſalvation from it; we ſhall feel for thoſe, who are not ſenſible of their own miſery: and this deſire will induce us to attempt doing good to our beloved friends, and relations: and thus ſuch perſons, as have been the grief, and diſgrace of their families, may, by the mercy of God, become their protection, as well as ornament. We ſinners, having a proſpect of eſcaping deſtruction, ſhould not ſeek great things for ourſelves, either in the world, or in the church; yet ſuch diſtinctions are often conferred on thoſe, who aſpire the leaſt unto them. Whilſt we are ſerving God, and employed for the good of his people, we may ſecurely confide in his protection, and need not fear what man can do unto us; as the dangers to which we may be expoſed, will eventually iſſue in admiration of the Lord's truth, love, and power, in our preſervation; yet we ſhould uſe every prudent, and lawful means of ſafety; and be thankful to, and recompenſe the inſtruments of it. But even in the exerciſe of gratitude, we muſt not oblige our benefactors in any thing, that is contrary to the will of God, or the intereſts of his people; nor flatter them with the hope of deliverance from future puniſhment, except in the method of the goſpel: and if any of our engagements are ratified with an oath, the utmoſt reverence and caution ſhould be uſed in taking, and the greateſt exactneſs in fulfilling that ſolemn obligation. Whilſt the accompliſhment of ſome of God's promiſes, is a pledge for the performance of the whole to the true believer: thoſe terrors of conſcience, and that ſenſe of divine wrath, which diſmay the ungodly, but bring them not to repentance, are fearful preſages of approaching deſtruction. But grace yet abounds to the chief of ſinners; let them without delay flee to Chriſt, and all ſhall be well.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *And Joſhua*, &c.] Early in the morning, Joſhua took meaſures for the people's march from the place of their encampment, to the very borders of the river Jordan; where they arrived in the evening, and lodged there that night, that they might be ready to paſs over the next morning.

V. 2. *After three days*, &c.] That is from the orders before mentioned, (c. i. v. 11,) and perhaps from the return of the ſpies, during which time they had made all requiſite preparations. It does not appear whether the people expected a miraculous interpoſition to facilitate their paſſage, or whether they had thoughts of any other method of getting over; but they were very obedient, and tractable, and ſeem to have harboured no diſtruſt about the event. At any time the paſſage of ſuch a multitude of men, women, and children, and flocks and herds, and all their ſubſtance, by fords, or other ordinary means, muſt have been attended with much difficulty, and delay; and with great danger

3 And

3 And they commanded the people, ſaying, When ye ſee the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the prieſts the Levites bearing it, then ye ſhall remove from your place, and go after it.

4 Yet there ſhall be a ſpace between you and it, about two thouſand cubits by meaſure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye muſt go; for ye have not paſſed *this* way heretofore.

5 And Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Sanctify yourſelves: for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

6 And Joſhua ſpake unto the prieſts, ſaying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and paſs over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the ſight of all Iſrael, that they may know that as I was with Moſes, *ſo* I will be with thee.

8 And thou ſhalt command the prieſts that bear the ark of the covenant, ſaying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye ſhall ſtand ſtill in Jordan.

9 And Joſhua ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10 And Joſhua ſaid, Hereby ye ſhall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgaſhites, and the Amorites, and the Jebuſites.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth paſſeth over before you into Jordan.

12 Now therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Iſrael, out of every tribe a man.

13 And it ſhall come to paſs, as ſoon as the ſoles of the feet of the prieſts that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, ſhall reſt in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan ſhall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they ſhall ſtand upon an heap.

14 And it came to paſs, when the people removed from their tents to paſs over Jordan, and the prieſts bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the prieſts that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of

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alſo, if the enemies had oppoſed them: but when Jordan overflowed all his banks, it would probably have been impracticable; for whatever appearance this river may make to modern travellers, the whole hiſtory repreſents it as being at that time a conſiderable, and rapid ſtream. However the paſſage of Jordan recorded in this chapter was peculiarly ſuited to attend all the other wonders, which the Lord had wrought for Iſrael: by a repetition of the miracles of drying up the floods, their entrance into Canaan correſponded with their departure out of Egypt; the diſmay of the Canaanites would be increaſed, the faith of the Iſraelites ſtrengthened, their expectations raiſed, and their conqueſts facilitated; and in all theſe things God would be glorified. It can only be attributed to a ſupernatural power intimidating or infatuating the minds of the Canaanites, that they never attempted to defend this barrier of their country, or to obſtruct the paſſage of the Iſraelites.

V. 3, 4.] The prieſts (who were Levites of the family of Kohath) bearing the ark, were commanded to march near three quarters of a mile before the people, until they arrived at their deſtined ſtation; by which it appeared that this ſymbol of the divine preſence protected them, not they it. A noble defiance of the enemies of Iſrael was thus given; who were, in ſome ſenſe, challenged to attack the unarmed prieſts, or to attempt to ſeize the unattended ark: the faith, and courage of the prieſts were alſo tried, and diſplayed for an example to the people: a reverence for the ſymbol of the divine preſence, ſuited to that diſpenſation of darkneſs and diſtance, was expreſſed: The whole congregation would alſo have a fairer opportunity of viewing the ark, the diviſion of Jordan, and "the "way, by which they were to go," than if it had been nearer; and as they witneſſed the obedience of the inanimate creation to their covenant God, they might alſo be inſtructed to obey likewiſe.

V. 5. *Sanctify*, &c.] *(See note, Exod.* c. xix. v. 10.)

V. 7. *This day*, &c.] The people wanted ſome proof that the Lord was with Joſhua, as he had been with Moſes, (c. i. v. 17,) but by this event, that was rendered unqueſtionable. At the river Jordan, and probably at Bethabara, or the houſe of paſſage, that is, in the very ſame place, where Iſrael paſſed over that river, the Lord Jeſus began to be magnified, by a voice from heaven, &c.

V. 8. *When ye are come to the brink*, &c.] At the brink of the river the prieſts were commanded to ſtop, until the channel was dried; and then to take their ſtation in the midſt of it, till all the people were paſſed over, (v. 17.)

V. 15. *For Jordan*, &c.] This aroſe from the melting of the ſnows upon mount Libanus; and this circumſtance ſeems to have been purpoſely choſen, to render the miracle more inconteſtible, and ſtupendous.

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the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harveſt,)

16 That the waters which came down from above ſtood, *and* roſe up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that *is* beſide Zaretan: and thoſe that came down toward the ſea of the plain, *even* the ſalt ſea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people paſſed over right againſt Jericho.

17 And the prieſts that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD ſtood firm on dry ground in the midſt of Jordan, and all the Iſraelites paſſed over on dry ground, until all the people were paſſed clean over Jordan.

V. 16, 17.] The waters below ran off towards the Dead Sea, and left the channel dry for the ſpace of ſeveral miles; whilſt thoſe above accumulated by the miraculous power of God, and ſtood like mountains very far back towards the ſea of Tiberias; without inundating the adjacent country. With an illuſtrious example of faith, and obedience, the prieſts bearing the ark, marched into the midſt of the dry channel, and there took their ſtand, with the waters piled up over their heads, and nothing to prevent their being overwhelmed by them, but the inviſible power of God. In this ſtation they abode all the day long, until the people, encouraged by their example, had in ſucceſſion marched over, with all that appertained to them, and were all ſafe landed on the further ſhore. The paſſage through the Red Sea was in the night, when fleeing from the Egyptians, and with trepidation: but they paſſed Jordan in the day time, with previous warning, leiſurely, directly oppoſite to Jericho, and with a triumphant defiance of the Canaanites. This paſſage over Jordan after their weary wanderings in the wilderneſs, as an entrance into Canaan, ſhadowed out the believer's paſſage through death to heaven, after he hath finiſhed his wanderings in this ſinful world. From his firſt deliverance from the yoke of ſin, he hath been in a wilderneſs, and though fed with the bread of heaven, and drinking of the waters of life and ſalvation; though guided, guarded, and encouraged by the Providence, the Word, and the Spirit of God, he hath long been weary with his toilſome march, and hath wiſhed for reſt. To others death may well be terrific, for the conſequence is tremendous: but to the believer the river is, as it were divided, the terror is removed, the paſſage is ſafe, and ſometimes joyful, and the event glorious; for the waters are cut off; the ſecond death beyond the grave hath no power over them: Chriſt the true ark hath paſſed before them in the ſame way to glory; yea he comes and meets them, and by his animating preſence, and ſure protection, maintains their faith and hope, until they iſſue in viſion and enjoyment, being ſafe landed on Canaan's ſhore.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who are attentive to the duties of their ſtation, and enemies to ſloth, and ſelf-indulgence in every form, are likely to be eminent, and uſeful; nor can any others expect to be ſo.—We muſt not heſitate in our courſe, becauſe of diſtant difficulties, which we perceive not how we ſhall be able to ſurmount: but ſhould ſtill proceed as far as we can, and truſt in the Lord to remove the obſtacles, when the critical moment arrives; for his interpoſitions are intended to excite, not to ſuperſede our activity. But, in depending upon the Lord's aſſiſtance, we muſt look well to the path of our feet, eſpecially when "we "have not paſſed that way heretofore:" the precepts of the word of God, the diſpenſations of his Providence, the counſel, and example of his miniſters, and people, together with the inward teaching of his Holy Spirit, when properly attended to, and humbly ſought for, will make our way plain *to us*, though perplexed in itſelf: and we cannot in general go out of our way, in keeping cloſe to the ordinances of God, and *thus* following the ark in all it's removals. In the path of duty, in this manner aſcertained, we need not fear rivers of trouble, mountains of difficulty, or hoſts of oppoſing foes; but confiding in the faithful promiſe, the Almighty power, and covenant love of our God, who "is the God of the whole earth," we may proceed with all boldneſs, and alacrity. Whether we be called to endure poverty, pain, labour, perſecution, reproach, or death, we are following the author and finiſher of our faith; nor can we ſet our foot in any perilous, or arduous ſpot, through our whole journey, but faith will there deſcry the print of the Redeemer's foot, who trod that very path to glory above, and bids us follow him, "that "where he is, there we may be alſo." His miniſters are called to ſet the people an example of conſtancy, patience, and unſhaken confidence in him, by abiding in thoſe perilous, and difficult ſtations, which he hath aſſigned them, when others fear to paſs that way; and in ſo doing they may expect peculiar ſupport and protection: (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 1:) but if they heſitate to take the lead in facing danger, and enduring hardſhip; and ſhew an undue attention to their own eaſe, ſecurity, and indulgence, their exhortations will be very lightly regarded by the people. The more adventurous we are *in the path of duty*, the greater evidence we ſhall have of the Lord's love to us, and care of us; for he will not diſappoint the expectation of faith, but rather exceed, in due ſeaſon, our moſt enlarged hopes. But would we experience the more ſignal effects of his love and power, we muſt ſtudy to put away from us the pollutions of ſin, and be peculiarly careful not "to grieve the Holy "Spirit of God;" we muſt diligently obey his commandments, follow his directions, expect help from him, and give him all the glory.—The Chriſtian's courſe originates from "the working of the mighty power of God," in his converſion, and proceeds in a daily experience of that ſame power maintaining, and carrying on the work of "renew-"ing in the Spirit of his mind," in the midſt of innumerable ſnares, temptations, and counteracting obſtacles: but in the laſt conflict eſpecially the believer will find that the Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all "that he aſks, or thinks, according to that power, which "now worketh in him." And ſhould the King of terrors aſſume his moſt horrid form, (like Jordan overflowing all his banks,) yet the true Chriſtian may be aſſured of a ſpeedy victory, and a glorious triumph over this laſt enemy. Yea the feeble Chriſtian, as well as he who has the ſtrongeſt faith, ſhall conquer in this conflict; ſhall paſs ſafe through

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. A two-fold monument of Iſrael's paſſage over Jordan, erected by the command of God, v. 1—9. 20. *2d. Further particulars of that event; the prieſts aſcending out of the river, and the waters returning to their courſe,* 10—18. *3d. The date of the tranſaction, the place of their encampment, and the preſcribed uſe of the appointed memorials, v.* 19. 21—24.

AND it came to paſs, when all the people were clean paſſed over Jordan, that the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying,

2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man;

3 And command ye them, ſaying, Take you hence out of the midſt of Jordan, out of the place where the prieſts feet ſtood firm, twelve ſtones; and ye ſhall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where ye ſhall lodge this night.

4 Then Joſhua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Iſrael, out of every tribe a man;

5 And Joſhua ſaid unto them, Paſs over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midſt of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a ſtone upon his ſhoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Iſrael;

6 That this may be a ſign among you, *that* when your children aſk *their fathers* in time to come, ſaying, What *mean* ye by theſe ſtones?

7 Then ye ſhall anſwer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it paſſed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and theſe ſtones ſhall be for a memorial unto the children of Iſrael for ever.

8 And the children of Iſrael did ſo as Joſhua commanded, and took up twelve ſtones out of the midſt of Jordan, as the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Iſrael, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

9 And Joſhua ſet up twelve ſtones in the midſt of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the prieſts which bare the ark of the covenant ſtood: and they are there unto this day.

10 For the prieſts which bare the ark ſtood in the midſt of Jordan, until every thing was

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this path, beſet with terrors, until all the company of the redeemed "are clean paſſed over," and landed ſafe on Canaan's ſhore.—For though they have none of them paſſed this way heretofore; yet Jeſus their brother, and friend hath gone before, and croſſed the river, when it's floods were ſwelled to a tremendous height: and by paſſing through he hath divided the floods before them; and he ſafely reached the heavenly ſhore, when he roſe from the dead as the firſt-fruits of his people, and aſcended into heaven as their forerunner: and he began to be magnified in the ſight of all Iſrael; when thus riſen and aſcended he ſent down his Holy Spirit, to give aſſiſtance to his apoſtles, and ſucceſs to his preached goſpel. Now therefore they may march through this dreaded river without danger, or terror, if they are but able to keep the eye of faith fixed upon his perſon, his complete ſalvation, his word of promiſe, and the inheritance, which he hath provided for them on the other ſide. Let us then treaſure up our experiences of his faithful and tender care in the whole courſe of our lives, that they may come in aid to our faith, and hope in this laſt conflict: let us carefully conſider the examples of others, whoſe deaths we witneſs, or of which we read and hear, to allay our fears, and encourage our hearts: let us prepare daily for death, by the habitual exerciſe of faith and repentance, and a conſcientious, and diligent attention to the duties of our ſtation; and let us watch and pray againſt the anxious, or diſtreſſing fear of it. The Lord will provide for our paſſage of this Jordan, when the time comes; and we ſhall ſoon join the innumerable multitude, that in the Canaan above are ſinging the praiſes of their great Deliverer, who hath both redeemed them from Egyptian bondage, and brought them ſafe to the promiſed land, through his precious blood, and by his all-conquering arm.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *Take you*, &c.] Theſe twelve men had before been ſelected to hold themſelves in readineſs. One was choſen to repreſent every tribe; for though ſome had received their inheritance on the other ſide of Jordan, they were all brethren united in one intereſt, and of one religion; and, to cement their union, they were all to join in ſecuring the remembrance of this ſignal miracle.

V. 3—9.] After the people were all paſſed over Jordan, and before they marched to the place of their encampment, or had opportunity of refreſhing themſelves, or taking care for their families, they were required, without delay, to take theſe meaſures of perpetuating the remembrance of this important event. The prieſts patiently and courageouſly kept their ſtation, not only until the people were all paſſed over; but until theſe men had returned into the midſt of the river, and taken each a large ſtone, probably as great as they could carry, and brought it on ſhore; and until twelve ſtones had been in the midſt of the river formed into a monument of the event, which doubtleſs was at ſome times viſible long afterwards.

V. 10. *That Moſes*, &c.] We read not that Moſes gave any inſtructions about their paſſage over Jordan: but he

finiſhed that the LORD commanded Joſhua to ſpeak unto the people, according to all that Moſes commanded Joſhua: and the people haſted and paſſed over.

11 And it came to paſs, when all the people were clean paſſed over, that the ark of the LORD paſſed over, and the prieſts, in the preſence of the people.

12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manaſſeh, paſſed over armed before the children of Iſrael, as Moſes ſpake unto them.

13 About forty thouſand, prepared for war, paſſed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

14 On that day the LORD magnified Joſhua in the ſight of all Iſrael; and they feared him, as they feared Moſes, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying,

16 Command the prieſts that bear the ark of the teſtimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17 Joſhua therefore commanded the prieſts, ſaying, Come ye up out of Jordan,

18 And it came to paſs, when the prieſts that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midſt of Jordan, *and* the ſoles of the prieſts feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as *they did* before.

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the firſt month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the eaſt border of Jericho.

20 And thoſe twelve ſtones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joſhua pitch in Gilgal.

21 And he ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, When your children ſhall aſk their fathers in time to come, ſaying, What *mean* theſe ſtones?

22 Then ye ſhall let your children know, ſaying, Iſrael came over this Jordan on dry land.

23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were paſſed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red ſea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over;

24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty; that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

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charged Joſhua to obey the Lord, and the people to be obſervant of Joſhua; to which they peculiarly attended on this occaſion. It is ſaid, "that the people haſted;" they none of them waſted any time; and ſome of them were timorous through unbelief: but there was no undue haſte or confuſion.

V. 12, 13.] This armed body of men, unincumbered with families or flocks, and prepared to repel the enemy, if they attacked them, would leave thoſe of the other tribes more at liberty to attend upon their perſonal, and domeſtic concerns.

V. 14. *They feared*, &c.] They honoured his perſon, and ſubmitted to his authority ever after, as they had to thoſe of Moſes, perceiving that the Lord was with him, as he had been with Moſes.

V. 16—18.] The prieſts moved not from their ſtation, till Joſhua, who had commanded them thither, had ordered them thence; nor did he give them their diſmiſſion, till he had inſtructions for the Lord ſo to do: ſo obedient were all parties, in proper ſubordination, to the word of God, and ſo entirely confident of his protection. Probably Eleazar the high prieſt inquired of, and received anſwers from the Lord for Joſhua on theſe occaſions, having a ſpecial injunction ſo to do, (*Num.* c. xxvii. v. 21.) As ſoon as the prieſts had reached the ſhore, and the ark, the ſymbol of the Lord's preſence, had left the river, the waters gradually reverted to their natural courſe, and flowed over all the banks as before; ſhewing that the power of him, who enacted the laws of nature, had, for the ſake of his people, for a time ſuſpended them.

V. 19. *On the tenth day*, &c.] This is computed to have been exactly five days ſhort of forty years after they ſet out from Egypt, and juſt in time to prepare for the celebration of the paſſover, upon their entrance into Canaan, as they had done previous to their departure from Egypt.

V. 20—24.] Some ſuppoſe that theſe ſtones were to be ſeen until the time of Chriſt, or even later: they would be an abiding memorial of this extraordinary miracle; from age to age inquiries would be excited reſpecting them; the tradition of the event would be thus perpetuated, and circulated; many both of the Iſraelites, and of the inhabitants of diſtant nations, might have their curioſity excited to look into the Scriptures, and to inquire after the wonderful works of the Lord for Iſrael; and parents would have an opportunity of diverting the inquiſitiveneſs of their children into a profitable channel, by encouraging them to aſk, and by reſolving their queſtions concerning them: and in all theſe ways they might ſubſerve the intereſts of godlineſs. Some conſider theſe twelve ſtones as types of the twelve apoſtles, who were choſen witneſſes of the Saviour's reſurrection.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The works of the Lord are ſo worthy of remembrance, and the heart of man is ſo prone to forget them, that vari-

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. The conſternation of the Canaanites, v. 1. 2d. The circumciſion of the Iſraelites, and their celebration of the paſſover, &c, with the ceaſing of the manna, v. 2—12. 3d. Joſhua favoured with a remarkable viſion, v. 13—15.

AND it came to paſs, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the ſide of Jordan weſtward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the ſea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Iſrael, until we were paſſed over, that their heart melted; neither was there ſpirit in them any more, becauſe of the children of Iſrael.

2 At that time the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Make thee ſharp knives, and circumciſe again the children of Iſrael the ſecond time.

3 And Joſhua made him ſharp knives, and circumciſed the children of Iſrael at the hill of the foreſkins.

4 And this *is* the cauſe why Joſhua did circumciſe: All the people that came out of Egypt *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderneſs by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

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ous methods have been adopted to refreſh our memories, for the glory of God, and for our advantage, and that of our children. In order to concur in ſo reaſonable a ſervice, our eaſe muſt be diſregarded, and our ordinary employments and refreſhments poſtponed, that we may loſe no time in rendering the tribute of praiſe for mercies received, whilſt the ſenſe of gratitude glows in the heart, and before the lively impreſſion hath time to wear off. There is a ſtyle in the works, and in the word of God: majeſtic in ſimplicity, expreſſive and emphatic; but with genuine dignity, diſdaining the incumbrance of uſeleſs ornament, and affected ſplendour. Never did triumphal column, or arch, with all the magnificence of architecture, ſo aptly record a memorable victory, as theſe twelve rude ſtones from Jordan's channel, recorded the miraculous paſſage of Iſrael into Canaan, under the conduct of the ark of the Lord. Such is the inſtituted memorial of the Redeemer's dying love: ſimple, expreſſive, and deſcriptive both of the purchaſe, and of the appropriation of his ſalvation, of our repentance, faith, love, and gratitude; of our profeſſion, of our dependance upon him, devotedneſs to him, and fellowſhip with him, and with his people, and of our future harmonious felicity in the realms above. Yet is all this inſtruction clothed with ſuch external meanneſs, that the carnal eye can ſee no comelineſs or excellency therein, more than in him, whoſe love is therein commemorated. To make it ſuit the groveling minds, and ſelfiſh purpoſes of ambitious men, it hath been dreſſed up with pomp, and parade, of meaning, and of ceremony, which have ſo diſguiſed and perplexed the divine appointment, that many of the true diſciples of Chriſt have been ſtrangely frighted from it, as if ſome formidable miſchief lay concealed within, to the diſhonour of the Lord, and the detriment of their own ſouls. But we ſhould take every proper occaſion of attending on that ſacred ordinance, and learning from the word of God it's ſimple meaning and intention; and, ſhould gladly ſpeak of them, when opportunity is afforded, to our children, our neighbours, and to every inquirer, who ſeeks information upon the important ſubject. In this, and every thing elſe, the curioſity of our children ſhould be improved as an opening to their inſtruction: and they who take pleaſure in ſearching out the works of the Lord, and in diffuſing their knowledge amongſt ſtrangers, or perpetuating it to poſterity, ſhall more and more underſtand his loving kindneſs and mercy. Gladly ſhould we all render every ſervice we can to the church of God, and conſider ourſelves as having one common intereſt with all the families of the redeemed, however ſeparated by rivers, ſeas, or mountains; or the more *unnatural* partition walls of ſects and parties; and in ſo doing, we may ſafely commit our families, and intereſts to the protection of Iſrael's God. When, with careful attention to the commands and providence of God, we have taken the place, and engaged in the ſervice aſſigned us; we ought patiently to abide in it, and not to attempt to remove, till he evidently commands us thence. Nothing can hurt us in, and nothing ſhould intimidate us from ſo doing. In like manner alſo, we ought patiently to wait our diſmiſſion from this ſinful world, ready to depart, but willing to bear the croſs, and maintain the conflict, till the Lord's purpoſes for his own glory, and his people's good, be accompliſhed in us. But the removal of the righteous is freqently like the opening of the flood-gates of divine judgments upon guilty nations, which have been reſtrained by their preſence, example, and prayers: much more when the miniſters, and ordinances of God are removed, may national calamities be expected: but let us bleſs God that this is not, and let us unite in prayer that it may not be the caſe with our favoured land; and let us remember, that we are benefited by, and are bound to bleſs God for all the mercy ſhewn to his church in all ages, and nations; and every recent favour ſhould excite us to repeat his praiſes for former bleſſings.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Their heart melted*, &c.] Though great terror had before pervaded the minds of the inhabitants of Canaan; yet their kings ſeem to have kept up their courage: until they heard that the barrier of the land was broken through, by a miracle ſimilar to the dividing of the Red ſea, and that the vaſt multitudes of Iſrael were actually encamped in their country, with the expreſs purpoſe of poſſeſſing it, and extirpating the former inhabitants: on hearing this their hearts melted with terror, as wax before the fire, which both anticipated, and facilitated their deſtruction.

V. 2—8. *Circumciſe again—the ſecond time*, &c.] It appears probable from this paſſage, that there was a general circumciſion of all the Iſraelites, who had been left uncircumciſed in their bondage, previous to their departure out of Egypt: In reference to which, this is called "the ſe-"cond time." It is evident, that the Iſraelites, who had

5 Now

5 Now all the people that came out were circumciſed; but all the people *that were* born in the wilderneſs by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumciſed.

6 For the children of Iſrael walked forty years in the wilderneſs, till all the people, *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt were conſumed, becauſe they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD ſware, that he would not ſhew them the land which the LORD ſware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

7 And their children *whom* he raiſed up in their ſtead, them Joſhua circumciſed: for they were uncircumciſed, becauſe they had not circumciſed them by the way.

8 And it came to paſs, when they had done circumciſing all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you: wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

10 And the children of Iſrael encamped in Gilgal, and kept the paſſover on the fourteenth day of the month at even, in the plains of Jericho.

11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the paſſover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the ſelf-ſame day.

12 And the manna ceaſed on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Iſrael manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

13 And it came to paſs, when Joſhua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there ſtood a man over againſt him, with his ſword drawn in his hand: and Joſhua went unto him, and ſaid unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adverſaries?

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been born in the wilderneſs, were generally left uncircumciſed: but the cauſe of this intermiſſion is very much controverted; whether it aroſe from their ſinful negligence; or whether the Lord diſpenſed with it, during their wanderings; or whether they were laid under a kind of interdict, when the rebellious generation was doomed to die in the wilderneſs. However the command given to Joſhua, and by him to the people, to perform ſo painful an operation upon ſo great a multitude, immediately upon entering the enemy's country, when it was well known that they would thereby for ſome days be utterly diſabled, (*Gen.* c. xxxiv. v. 25, 26;) formed a very great trial of their faith: and their prompt and univerſal obedience in ſuch critical circumſtances manifeſted a confidence in the Lord's protection, and a ſubmiſſion to his will, which confirm the ſentiment, that this was the beſt of all the generations of Iſrael. As circumciſion was performed by any perſon, though the number to be circumciſed was great, it would ſoon be completed, probably on the very firſt day, after their paſſage over Jordan.

V. 9. *Have I rolled away*, &c.] When the Iſraelites were thus brought into the promiſed land, and the covenant of the Lord was thus ſolemnly ratified with them, by the appointed ſeal, the reproach of their Egyptian bondage, and idolatrous cuſtoms was rolled away; and it was plain, that the Lord had not brought them forth into the wilderneſs to deſtroy them. The word Gilgal ſignifies to roll away: the ſame place being alſo called "the Hill of "Foreſkins;" becauſe of the numbers, whoſe foreſkins were left buried there.

V. 10. *Kept the paſſover*, &c.] This general circumciſion was ordered as preparatory to the ſolemn obſervance of the paſſover in it's ſeaſon, for no uncircumciſed perſon might eat thereof. This was a proper entrance upon the promiſed land, as a holy land: the celebration of the paſſover immediately preceded their departure out of Egypt; and the ſame was their firſt employment upon their entrance into Canaan: for they were both brought out of Egypt, and into the land of their inheritance, "that they might "keep the Lord's ſtatutes, and obſerve his laws:" (*Pſalm* cv. v. 43—45.) The circumciſion being performed on the 11th day of the month, they would be enabled to eat the paſſover on the evening of the 14th; and by the time that the days of unleavened bread were ended, they would be perfectly healed, and fit for action. In the mean time, the Canaanites were intimidated, and reſtrained of God from aſſaulting them; (*Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 24.) Nay, their very confidence in thus ſetting their enemies at defiance, whilſt they attended to the ordinances of their religion, and engaged Jehovah to fight their battles, if it were known amongſt the inhabitants of the land, would tend to increaſe their conſternation.

V. 11. *The old corn*, &c.] This they would find plentifully in the deſerted granaries of the affrighted inhabitants: and thus the manna, being no longer neceſſary, ceaſed, after having been ſent them regularly for almoſt forty years!

V. 13—15. *By Jericho*, &c.] Joſhua was either taking a view of the city, in order to attack it, or employed in ſerious meditation, or both alternately; when he was ſurpriſed with the appearance of one, in form as a man, with a drawn ſword in his hand: but not at all intimidated, he accoſted him, and demanded of him, whether he were an ally or an enemy; (for there were to be no neuters in that war;) and received for anſwer "that he was come, not only as an

14 And he ſaid, Nay; but *as* captain of the hoſt of the LORD am I now come. And Joſhua fell on his face to the earth, and did worſhip, and ſaid unto him, What ſaith my LORD unto his ſervant?

15 And the captain of the LORD's hoſt ſaid unto Joſhua, Looſe thy ſhoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou ſtandeſt *is* holy. And Joſhua did ſo.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. Directions, and promiſes from the Lord to Joſhua, relative to the ſiege of Jericho, v. 1—5. 2d. The directions punctually obſerved, v. 6—16. 3d. The devoting of the city and all therein to utter deſtruction, except Rahab, and thoſe in her houſe, and the metals, which were conſecrated to the Lord, v. 17—19. 4th. The deſtruction of Jericho, and the preſervation of Rahab, &c. v. 20—25. 5th. A curſe denounced on him, who ſhould rebuild that city, v. 26, 27.

NOW Jericho was ſtraitly ſhut up, becauſe of the children of Iſrael: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the LORD ſaid into Joſhua, See I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour.

" ally but as commander in chief over the Lord's hoſt, and " over Joſhua himſelf:" upon which Joſhua recognized, and worſhipped him as his Lord; and reverently proſtrating himſelf upon the earth, waited and aſked to know his will. This worſhip was not only received, but he was further commanded to ſhew the ſame token of reſpect to the heavenly viſion, which had been required, when the Lord appeared to Moſes in the buſh: this being done, he received from him the orders, contained in the enſuing chapter, which is a continuation of the ſubject. All theſe circumſtances eſtabliſh, beyond a doubt, the concluſion, that this *armed man*, was no other than the Son of God, Jehovah, the ſecond perſon in the ſacred Trinity, the Captain of our ſalvation, anticipating his incarnation, and aſſuring Joſhua of ſucceſs in this war; which in all reſpects was typical of the good fight of faith, that every true Chriſtian muſt fight under his banner, and in which he will conquer by his preſence and aſſiſtance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How dreadful is their caſe, whoſe condemnation is irreverſible, for whom no mercy is reſerved, and who ſee the wrath of God, and his deſerved vengeance advancing towards them with ſteady pace, without any poſſibility of averting or eſcaping them! Such will be the horrible ſituation of the wicked, when ſummoned to appear before the tribunal of an offended God; nor can words expreſs the anguiſh of their feelings, or the greatneſs of their terror, when they ſhall in vain call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the intolerable frown of their angry Judge, and the dire ſentence which they will perceive him prepared to utter againſt, and execute upon them! As their hearts cannot endure, nor their hands be ſtrong in ſuch circumſtances, O! that they would now take warning, and before it be too late, would flee for refuge to lay hold on that hope, which is ſet before them in the ſalvation of the goſpel. The maxims, and conduct of the church of God are not conformed to thoſe of the world: what general ever opened a campaign in an enemy's country in the manner that Joſhua did? On ſuch occaſions all attention paid to the exerciſes of religion, is too generally conſidered, as a needleſs waſte of time. Yet, if the help of God be the beſt ſecurity of ſucceſs, and if his anger be more to be feared than the ſword of any enemy, it will be found true policy to begin every expedition, with repentance of ſin, and attendance on his ſolemn worſhip, and with uſing every method of ſecuring his protection; though to a carnal eye the tendency may appear unfavourable to ſucceſs. However, the Chriſtian ſoldier muſt thus begin his ſpiritual warfare; nor can he face any of his enemies, without the true circumciſion of the heart, as the internal ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith, and the ratification of the new covenant betwixt a reconciled God and his ſoul: then feeding on Chriſt, the true Paſchal Lamb, who was ſacrificed for ſinners, and keeping the feaſt with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth, he will be prepared for the conflict. Yet he will not proſper ſo long, as he neglects any of the ordinances, or commandments of God; or lays under the reproach of being in bondage to any ſin, of living in conformity to the world, or of acting in any thing inconſiſtent with his holy profeſſion. But duly attending to the worſhip of God, and the means of grace, and daily girding on his divine armour, (*Eph.* c. vi. v. 11—18;) he may boldly defy all his enemies, and reſt aſſured of the preſence and protection of the great Captain of our ſalvation; whoſe perſon he will reverently worſhip, whoſe orders he will diligently obſerve, on whoſe aſſiſtance he will entirely depend, and by whom he will at length be made more than conqueror. Many things are amiſs in the beſt ſtate of the church on earth: but when young perſons have not ſo much as the appearance of religion, it will redound to the parent's reproach, being generally the conſequence of the parent's miſconduct. When the upright believer is convinced of his neglect or ſin, he will readily ſet about amendment; and when he is in a proper frame of mind, he will account the moſt ſelf-denying commands, or myſterious diſpenſations of the Lord, reaſonable, wiſe, and kind. Finally, what the Lord requires of his people, he will ſupply them with the means of performing; when one ſource of proviſion fails, he will open another: nor ſhall the manna for their ſouls ever fail them, till they arrive at the Canaan above, and banquet on it's rich and inexhauſtible proviſions.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Straitly ſhut up*, &c.] The king, and people of Jericho did not poſſeſs courage enough to attack the invaders; but ſhut themſelves up in the city, where doubtleſs they expected to defend themſelves under the protection of their walls, till ſuccours ſhould arrive from other quarters. We do not find that they made any advances towards an accommodation.

V. 2. *And the Lord*, &c.] The ſame perſon, who in

3 And ye ſhall compaſs the city, all *ye* men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus ſhalt thou do ſix days.

4 And ſeven prieſts ſhall bear before the ark ſeven trumpets of rams horns: and the ſeventh day ye ſhall compaſs the city ſeven times, and the prieſts ſhall blow with the trumpets.

5 And it ſhall come to paſs that when they make a long *blaſt* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the ſound of the trumpet, all the people ſhall ſhout with a great ſhout; and the wall of the city ſhall fall down flat, and the people ſhall aſcend up every man ſtraight before him.

6 And Joſhua the ſon of Nun called the prieſts, and ſaid unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let ſeven prieſts bear ſeven trumpets of rams horns before the ark of the LORD.

7 And he ſaid unto the people, Paſs on, and compaſs the city, and let him that is armed paſs on before the ark of the LORD.

8 And it came to paſs, when Joſhua had ſpoken unto the people, that the ſeven prieſts bearing the ſeven trumpets of rams horns paſſed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the prieſts that blew with the trumpets, and the rere-ward came after the ark, *the prieſts* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10 And Joſhua had commanded the people, ſaying, Ye ſhall not ſhout, nor make any noiſe with your voice, neither ſhall *any* word proceed out of your mouth until the day I bid you ſhout; then ſhall ye ſhout.

11 So the ark of the LORD compaſſed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joſhua roſe early in the morning, and the prieſts took up the ark of the LORD.

13 And ſeven prieſts bearing ſeven trumpets of rams horns before the ark of the LORD, went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rere-ward came after the ark of the LORD, *the prieſts* going on and blowing with the trumpets.

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the preceding chapter, called himſelf "the captain of the "hoſt of the Lord," is here called Jehovah: by commiſſion from him, and according to his inſtructions Joſhua was to commence, and conduct his hoſtilities againſt the Canaanites: and his authority ſanctioned, and even ſanctified all the terrible executions, with which it was attended; the ſword in his hand being the ſword of juſtice drawn againſt condemned criminals.

V. 3—5.] By this extraordinary method of beſieging the city, the Lord was pleaſed to put honour upon the ark, as the ſymbol of his preſence, and to manifeſt that all their victories were from him; for this was a ſpecimen, and key, for the explanation of thoſe that followed, by what means ſoever they were obtained. The faith, and patience of the people were thereby proved, and increaſed. The nature, and the utility of divinely appointed means were alſo illuſtrated, which muſt not be neglected, though utterly ineffectual *in themſelves*. The people's regard to the prieſthood would be augmented, and they would more readily give them their dues, when the Lord had thus employed them in the conqueſt of the land: and the preached goſpel, and it's effects, were typified thereby.—The word tranſlated "of rams horns," may be rendered "trumpets "of jubile," that is ſuch as were to be blown in the year of jubile: for their entrance upon the promiſed land was indeed a jubile unto them: inſtead of the dreadful trumpet of war, they were to ſound the trumpet of joy, as already conquerors, in the anticipation of aſſured faith. Probably they were the ſame trumpets, whoſe uſe was preſcribed before. (*Numb.* c. x. v. 1—10.) But as the number of the prieſts increaſed, more trumpets were formed either of ſilver, or of ſome other materials. The repeated preſcription of the number ſeven on this occaſion muſt not paſs unnoticed: "Seven prieſts," "ſeven trumpets," "ſeven "days," and "ſeven times on the ſeventh day." This attention to the number ſeven in Scripture probably had reference to the creation of the world in ſix days, and the Lord's reſting on the ſeventh, which completed the firſt week; and was the firſt reaſon aſſigned for the ſanctification of the ſabbath; and occaſioned the meaſuring of time, by the periodical return of the ſeventh day, in almoſt all ages and nations ever ſince. One of theſe ſeven days muſt have been a ſabbath-day; the Jews ſay, that it was the laſt, on which the city was taken: and as the labour employed was in the work of God, and immediately for his glory; and as it alſo typified the preached goſpel, which abounds moſt on the Lord's day, no objection ariſes againſt it from the fourth commandment; any more, than againſt the man's carrying his bed on the ſabbath day, in honour of Chriſt, who had healed him.

V. 7. *Paſs on*, &c.] This would be needful in order to level the fences, and remove all obſtructions out of the way, in paſſing round the city. This unprecedented proceſſion would create much ſurpriſe, and ſome conſternation at firſt among the inhabitants: but when one day paſſed after another, and the Iſraelites did not aſſault the city, and no effect followed from their marching about it; they would probably become ſecure, and treat the whole buſineſs with deriſion, as a mere ſenſeleſs parade.

14 And

14 And the ſecond day they compaſſed the city once, and returned into the camp: ſo they did ſix days.

15 And it came to paſs on the ſeventh day, that they roſe early, about the dawning of the day, and compaſſed the city after the ſame manner ſeven times: only on that day they compaſſed the city ſeven times.

16 And it came to paſs at the ſeventh time, when the prieſts blew with the trumpets, Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17 And the city ſhall be accurſed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot ſhall live, ſhe and all that *are* with her in the houſe, becauſe ſhe hid the meſſengers that we ſent.

18 And you in any wiſe keep *yourſelves* from the accurſed thing, leſt ye make *yourſelves* accurſed when ye take of the accurſed thing, and make the camp of Iſrael a curſe, and trouble it.

19 But all the ſilver, and gold, and veſſels of braſs and iron, *are* conſecrated unto the LORD: they ſhall come into the treaſury of the LORD.

20 So the people ſhouted when *the prieſts* blew with the trumpets: and it came to paſs, when the people heard the ſound of the trumpet, and the people ſhouted with a great ſhout, that the wall fell down flat, ſo that the people went up into the city, every man ſtraight before him, and they took the city.

21 And they utterly deſtroyed all that *was* in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and ſheep, and aſs, with the edge of the ſword.

22 But Joſhua had ſaid unto the two men that had ſpied out the country, Go into the harlot's houſe, and bring out thence the woman, and all that ſhe hath, as ye ſware unto her.

23 And the young men that were ſpies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that ſhe had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Iſrael.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the ſilver, and the gold, and the veſſels of braſs, and of iron, they put into the treaſury of the houſe of the LORD.

25 And Joſhua ſaved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's houſehold, and all that ſhe had; and ſhe dwelleth in Iſrael *even* unto this day: becauſe ſhe hid the meſſengers which Joſhua ſent to ſpy out Jericho.

26 And Joſhua adjured *them* at that time, ſaying, Curſed *be* the man before the LORD, that riſeth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he ſhall lay the foundation thereof in his firſt-

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V. 17—19.] (*Note, Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 28.) This city was, as it were, the firſt-fruits of Canaan, and was as ſuch to be wholly devoted to the Lord: the only advantages, which the people derived from this miraculous victory, were the deſtruction of their enemies, the dominion of the land, and the enriching of the ſanctuary. Every living creature was commanded to be ſlain, except Rahab, and thoſe, who had taken refuge in her houſe; and whatever was not conſumed with fire was to be brought into the treaſury of the Lord. And if any Iſraelite dared to appropriate any part to himſelf, the curſe of Jericho would reſt upon him, and upon the camp of Iſrael, until he alſo, and all that appertained to him, were utterly deſtroyed. The whole was to be a ſolemn, and awful ſacrifice to the juſtice of God upon them, who had filled up the meaſure of their iniquities.

V. 22. *Go into the harlot's houſe*, &c.] As Rahab's houſe ſtood upon the wall of the city, the preſervation of it muſt be the effect of the Lord's ſpecial care of her: for had he ſo pleaſed, ſhe might have periſhed with the other inhabitants, without any violation of the ſpies engagement in behalf of Iſrael. But her faith ſaved her: the temporal deliverance was the pledge of eternal felicity; ſhe was firſt honoured as an inſtrument for the preſervation of her relations; then ſhe became a wife, and mother in Iſrael, and an anceſtor of David, and of Chriſt.

V. 26. *Curſed be the man*, &c.] Jericho, as devoted to utter deſtruction, was to continue a perpetual deſolation, and if any man ventured to rebuild it, he would do it at his peril, (1 *Kings*, c. xvi. v. 34,) for it was to be an emblem of the "everlaſting puniſhment," into which they ſhall go away, who are ſentenced to depart accurſed from God at the day of judgment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When ſinners are not only repeatedly warned to flee from the wrath to come, but are alarmed, and diſquieted in their conſciences with the apprehenſions of impending vengeance; yet harden their hearts in impenitency, and diſdain to ſue for peace, or to aſk forgiveneſs of God; they may be conſidered as "devoted to utter deſtruction:" nor can any counſel, courage, ſtrength, or numbers afford them the leaſt ſecurity, in their infatuated conteſt with the Almighty.

born, and in his youngeſt *ſon* ſhall he ſet up the gates of it.

27 So the LORD was with Joſhua; and his fame was *noiſed* throughout all the country.

When the Lord effects his purpoſes by ſuch means, and inſtruments, as we deem *adequate*; our views are apt to terminate upon *them*, and to overlook *him*, "who worketh "all things according to the counſel of his own will." To obviate this propenſity of the human mind, the Lord ſometimes deviates from the common track, and works by methods, or inſtruments, which in themſelves have no *real*, or *apparent* ſuitableneſs to, or connexion with the effect to be produced by them. (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 27, 28.) But our duty is to uſe only thoſe means, which the Lord appoints, or allows; to ſubmit to his will, and depend upon his bleſſing in ſo doing; and with patient waiting, and ſelf-denying diligence to expect the event; and we ſhall thus ſucceed, as far as it is conducive to our real good. The Lord takes peculiar pleaſure in leading men's attention to, and increaſing their regard for his own truths, and ordinances; in exerciſing their faith, and patience, in inuring them to ſubmit their underſtandings implicitly to his teaching, and their will to his authority; and in ſecuring to himſelf their praiſes, and thankful acknowledgments.—In promoting true religion eſpecially he works by means, and inſtruments, which the proud, the learned, the wiſe, and the wealthy of this world generally deſpiſe. The doctrine of a crucified Saviour, who is "GOD MANIFESTED "IN THE FLESH," as the only foundation of a ſinner's hope of pardon and acceptance, and the only ſource of ſanctifying grace, and true holineſs; preached by miniſters *generally* of obſcure original, and moderate abilities, and deſtitute of the advantages of eminent learning, or eloquence; *ſometimes* even homely, and uncouth in their appearance, and addreſs; and who are themſelves conſcious of much unworthineſ, infirmity, and inſufficiency for ſo arduous, and important an employ: this, I ſay, from generation to generation, in every country of the world, hath been the Lord's ordinary methods of accompliſhing thoſe purpoſes, which philoſophers, moraliſts, and lawgivers have attempted in vain; namely, "of teaching numbers to do "good, who have been accuſtomed to do evil." The diſregarded trumpet, blown by the deſpiſed miniſter; "the "preaching of the croſs," which is fooliſhneſs to them "that periſh," is only the token; the operation is from God. When that ſignal is given, in ſimple dependance upon "the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power," it becomes indeed mighty through God, and ſatan's ſtrong holds fall before it; (2 *Cor.* c. x. v. 4, 5.) Thus, at different periods have heathen idolatry, and Popiſh ſuperſtition fallen before this trumpet's feeble blaſt, attended with the ſhout, the fervent united prayers of the true Iſrael of God.—At ſome future period, (perhaps commencing early in the ſeventh thouſand years,) this goſpel ſhall be preached more earneſtly, more generally, and more ſucceſsfully than ever, and ſatan's remaining bulwarks ſhall all fall down to the ground; "and the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become "the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt."—In the mean time this goſpel is never preached in vain, in any nation, city, town, village, or houſe, by miniſters of any name, or ſect, who ſimply ſeek the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſouls thereby. Let experience decide, whether in our age and nation, this ſame "fooliſhneſs of preach-"ing," notwithſtanding all the imperfection of the inſtruments, hath not done more towards checking the enormous progreſs of profligacy, and open ungodlineſs, and producing a regard to the ordinances, and commandments of God, in every part of the land, than all other means combined: and whether a greater number of undeniable inſtances of open, hardened, atrocious ſinners being transformed into new creatures, and leading new lives, and becoming excellent relations, and members of ſociety, cannot be produced amongſt thoſe who profeſs, and preach, "Chriſt "Jeſus and him crucified!" than amongſt thoſe, who patroniſe a ſyſtem profeſſedly more rational, wiſe, and liberal. The latter is man's contrivance, and is left to it's own efficacy; the former is God's ordinance, and like the trumpets ſounding round the walls of Jericho, is rendered effectual by the power of God.—But would we witneſs more of theſe bleſſed effects of a preached goſpel, the miniſters muſt ſtrictly adhere to the Lord's directions, and ſimply depend on, expect, pray, and wait for his bleſſing; and not yield to wearineſs, though they long ſeem to labour in vain: they muſt be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; embracing every opportunity of preaching the word to few, or to many, every day, but abounding therein on the Lord's day; and they muſt diſregard the cauſeleſs reproaches, ſcoffs, and ſlanders of oppoſers; but ſhould be careful that they give no occaſion to thoſe, who ſeek occaſion of ſpeaking reproachfully. The people alſo, who know the joyful ſound ſhould ſhew their concurrence by a diligent attendance upon the word preached; they ſhould endeavour to ſtrengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts of the miniſters, by their holy examples, and concurring endeavours, in their families, and amongſt their connexions; and they ſhould eſpecially unite in earneſt, and conſtant prayers for the bleſſing of God upon their labours. But it ſhould be peculiarly noticed that the ſame goſpel, which proclaims ſalvation to the chief of ſinners, who believe, becomes the occaſion of increaſing, and accelerating condemnation to the obſtinate, and impenitent, who are never more in danger of immediate deſtruction, than when moſt careleſs, and ſecure; (1 *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 3.) Where the Lord hath given faith, he will in due time complete ſalvation: and when his grace is beſtowed upon one in a family, that one is often made the honoured inſtrument of bringing others of them to partake of the ſame bleſſings. The ſevereſt judgments of God, however they are at preſent objected to, will at the day, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, appear moſt perfectly righteous. Whoſoever is honoured as an inſtrument in the Lord's work, ſhould count the glory of God his firſt object, and patiently wait his time, and manner of being graciouſly recompenſed; for a covetous ſelfiſh profeſſor, or miniſter, who is more attentive to his own gain, than the glory of God, is not only accurſed himſelf, but a curſe to the ſociety, or congregation, to which he belongs. That can never be loſt, which is devoted to God, nor waſted, that is ſpent in his ſervice; nor will the leaſt kindneſs ſhewn to any of his people, for his ſake, go unrewarded. But how deep are the counſels of God! Grace abounds to ſome of the chief of ſinners; whilſt vengeance is poured out upon others of

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. Achan's ſin occaſioning Iſrael's defeat before Ai, v. 1—5. 2d. Joſhua, attended by the elders, humbling himſelf before God; with complaints, and diſcouragement, v. 6—9. 3d. The Lord declaring the reaſon of their defeat, and directing the removal of it, v. 10—15. 4th. The criminal detected, confeſſing, condemned, and executed, with all belonging to him, v. 16—26.

BUT the children of Iſrael committed a treſpaſs in the accurſed thing: for Achan, the ſon of Carmi, the ſon of Zabdi, the ſon of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accurſed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt the children of Iſrael.

2 And Joſhua ſent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beſide Beth-aven, on the eaſt ſide of Beth-el, and ſpake unto them, ſaying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joſhua, and ſaid unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thouſand men go up and ſmite Ai, *and* make not all the people to labour thither: for they *are but* few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thouſand men; and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai ſmote of them about thirty and ſix men: for they chaſed them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and ſmote them in the going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 And Joſhua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the even-tide, he and the elders of Iſrael, and put duſt upon their heads.

7 And Joſhua ſaid, Alas! O Lord GOD, wherefore haſt thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to deſtroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other ſide Jordan!

8 O LORD, what ſhall I ſay, when Iſrael turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land ſhall hear *of it*, and ſhall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

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them. His ſalvation, and his curſe are both of them for ever; and wo be to that man who attempts to obliterate the memorials, or diſannul the atteſtations, which the Lord hath made of his abhorrence of ſin, and of his vengeance againſt impenitent ſinners.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *But the children*, &c.] We have repeatedly read of the moſt promiſing appearances being blaſted by the ſins of the people: but here we read of wrath coming upon the whole congregation, through the ſin of one man. Contrary to the expreſs command, and in contempt of the awful curſe of God, Achan had ventured to appropriate part of the ſpoil of Jericho. The temptation was ſtrong, and he was overcome by it; we have rather cauſe to admire, that none elſe were guilty, than that one was. At the opening of the tabernacle worſhip we met with one ſtriking inſtance of the ſeverity of divine juſtice: here, upon the commencement of the wars of Canaan, we read of another: and the infancy of the Chriſtian church preſents to our view a ſimilar example. All were doubtleſs intended to increaſe reverence, and godly fear, to promote circumſpection, and to prevent wickedneſs in general, and hypocriſy in particular, from diſgracing the camp of Iſrael, or the church of God. And that the inſtance before us might excite the more general vigilance in Joſhua, in the elders, and in every Iſraelite; they were made to underſtand, that the guilt of an individual in theſe atrocious crimes, would be accounted the ſin of them all; until detected, and puniſhed; for they were all one body, nor could any part be infected with ſo dire a diſeaſe, without the detriment, and danger of the whole.

V. 3—5.] Their eaſy conqueſt of Jericho had not only encouraged them to hope for great ſucceſs, through the power of the Lord fighting for them; but had alſo excited a contempt of the enemy, a diſpoſition to ſpare themſelves, and one another's labour, and to expect the Lord to do all for them, without their uſing the proper means. Thus do men abuſe the doctrines of divine grace, and the promiſes of God, into an excuſe for their own ſloth, and ſelf-indulgence! Nor can we entirely exculpate Joſhua, as he ſeems to have formed his meaſures, without aſking counſel of the Lord; who left them to follow their own devices, in order to bring to light, and puniſh Achan's ſin.

V. 5. *About thirty, and ſix men*, &c.] Whether theſe men were peculiarly guilty of ſecret ſin, or not, (*Gen.* c. xxxviii. v. 7,) the Lord had righteous, and wiſe reaſons for his conduct; and the conſideration of man's ſinfulneſs, and of a future ſtate of retributions, will ſolve the difficulties in all ſuch providential diſpenſations.

V. 6—9.] Joſhua, and the elders very juſtly conſidered this ill ſucceſs as a divine rebuke, and properly thus expreſſed their ſorrow and humiliation before the ark of the Lord, in the moſt ſelf abaſing poſture: Joſhua's plea in prayer alſo was excellent; and his concern for the honour of God, more than even for the fate of Iſrael, if their enemies ſhould prevail over, and deſtroy them, was the genuine language of the Spirit of adoption. But all this was

10 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Get thee up; wherefore lieſt thou thus upon thy face?

11 Iſrael hath ſinned, and they have alſo tranſgreſſed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accurſed thing, and have alſo ſtolen, and diſſembled alſo, and they have put *it* even amongſt their own ſtuff.

12 Therefore the children of Iſrael could not ſtand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, becauſe they were accurſed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye deſtroy the accurſed from amongſt you.

13 Up, ſanctify the people, and ſay, Sanctify yourſelves againſt to-morrow; for thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, *There is* an accurſed thing in the midſt of thee, O Iſrael: thou canſt not ſtand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accurſed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye ſhall be brought according to your tribes: and it ſhall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh ſhall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD ſhall take ſhall come by houſholds; and the houſhold which the LORD ſhall take ſhall come man by man.

15 And it ſhall be, *that* he that is taken with the accurſed thing ſhall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath; becauſe he hath tranſgreſſed the covenant of the LORD, and becauſe he hath wrought folly in Iſrael.

16 So Joſhua roſe up early in the morning, and brought Iſrael by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his houſhold man by man; and Achan, the ſon of Carmi, the ſon of Zabdi, the ſon of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joſhua ſaid unto Achan, My ſon, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Iſrael, and make confeſſion unto him: and tell me now what thou haſt done; hide *it* not from me.

20 And Achan anſwered Joſhua, and ſaid, Indeed I have ſinned againſt the LORD God of Iſrael, and thus and thus have I done:

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evidently mixed with much infirmity: his conſidering this trivial check, as a forerunner of total ruin; his inquiring wherefore the Lord had brought them over Jordan; and above all his implied ſuſpicion, that it was in order to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites, may eaſily be accounted for, but cannot be excuſed.

V. 10. *Get thee up*, &c.] The Lord rebukes his deſpondency, and unbelieving fears, and intimates, that as chief magiſtrate, he hath other work to attend to, and had ſpent a full proportion of time in thus proſtrating himſelf before the ark; and that his prayers would be anſwered, when he had performed his duty, in removing the accurſed thing from amongſt them.

V. 11. *Iſrael hath ſinned*, &c.] The Lord had not broke his word, nor was his arm ſhortened, but Iſrael had ſinned, (*Iſaiah*, c. lix. v. 1—4;) and the crime was ſo great, that unleſs the offender were made a public example of, it would be interpreted as a breach of covenant, and the Lord would be with them no more.

V. 16—18.] The Lord was not pleaſed to point out the criminal immediately, but left the matter in ambiguity for ſome time, and at laſt brought it to light gradually; not only that both magiſtrates, and people might learn to do their duty, and to keep a vigilant eye over one another: but that the delay, and the proceſs might make the tranſaction more ſolemn, and excite the more ſelf examination, and earneſt ſanctification of themſelves, as they were commanded, by every method, which was appointed in their law. Then the matter ſeems to have been decided by lot, as an appeal to the heart-ſearching God. The feelings of Achan muſt have been very poignant, when he was thus ſingled out as the accurſed perſon, for whoſe ſake wrath was come upon Iſrael; (*Jon.* c. i. v. 7—12.) The tribe, family, and parentage of the offender are thus ſpecified, that the infamy of ſuch a crime might not reſt on the reputation of any other perſon, of the ſame name.

V. 19. *My ſon give*, &c.] Without any reproach, or inſult, with much calmneſs, and meekneſs Joſhua gave Achan the beſt counſel, of which his circumſtances could poſſibly admit: he addreſſed him even with the tender appellation of "my ſon," and exhorted him "to give glory unto "God, by confeſſing his ſin." This would imply an acknowledgment that the commandment was reaſonable, and the penalty equitable, that he himſelf was indeed the tranſgreſſor, and merited the puniſhment. It would give the Lord the glory of his omniſcience, of his juſtice, of his holineſs, of his authority, of his truth, and indeed of all his perfections; and by taking ſhame to himſelf, and accepting the puniſhment of his ſin in this world, he might beſt ſeek for mercy to his ſoul in the world to come. In all this Joſhua's conduct is worthy of the imitation of all Chriſtian magiſtrates, when under the painful neceſſity of pronouncing the ſentence of death upon criminals.

V. 20. *Indeed I have ſinned*, &c.] Had not Achan's confeſſion been extorted by the preceding proceſs, and delayed till he could no longer conceal his guilt, one would

21 When I ſaw among the ſpoils a goodly Babyloniſh garment, and two hundred ſhekels of ſilver, and a wedge of gold of fifty ſhekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midſt of my tent, and the ſilver under it.

22 So Joſhua ſent meſſengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the ſilver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midſt of the tent, and brought them unto Joſhua, and unto all the children of Iſrael, and laid them out before the LORD.

24 And Joſhua, and all Iſrael with him, took Achan the ſon of Zerah, and the ſilver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his ſons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his aſſes, and his ſheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them into the valley of Achor.

25 And Joſhua ſaid, Why haſt thou troubled us? the LORD ſhall trouble thee this day. And all Iſrael ſtoned him with ſtones, and burned them with fire, after they had ſtoned them with ſtones.

26 And they raiſed over him a great heap

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have deemed him a true penitent. However, though late, it was frank, and ingenuous: he not only allowed the fact, and the offence againſt Iſrael, but confeſſed "that he had "ſinned againſt the Lord God of Iſrael;" (*Pſalm* li. v. 4;) he deſcended to particulars, attempted no excuſe, or extenuation, complained not of the ſeverity of the ſentence, and made no attempts to prevent it's execution. As Joſhua ſays, (v. 25,) "the Lord ſhall trouble thee this day," ſome have thence argued the ſalvation of his ſoul; but we have nothing to do with deciding ſuch queſtions.

V. 21. *I ſaw*, &c.] The temptation entered by the carnal ſenſe, and excited the concupiſcence of the carnal heart; thus luſt was conceived, and ſin was brought forth. The goodly Babyloniſh garment, ſome coſtly robe, far fetched, and dear bought, was reſcued from the flames: and gold, and ſilver to the amount of eighty, or ninety pounds, were ſacrilegiouſly kept back from the treaſury of the Lord. For ſuch a *goodly* price, did Achan render himſelf accurſed, forfeited the fair proſpect of a rich inheritance in Canaan, became the troubler of Iſrael, and ruined his whole family; beſides the imminent danger, to which he expoſed his immortal ſoul! Such *folly*, as well as wickedneſs did he work in Iſrael, where true wiſdom might readily have been learned. No ſooner had he got poſſeſſion of his plunder, than it became his burden; and had he not been miraculouſly detected, he would have been conſumed with terrors, and would not have dared to uſe his ill-gotten treaſure: and when the other Iſraelites had been enriched, and enjoyed their abundance with credit, and a bleſſing, he would have loſt all the comfort of his portion, through this accurſed thing. So differently do the objects of temptation appear at a diſtance, to what they do, when apprehended, and when the infatuation ceaſes!

V. 23. *Laid them out before*, &c.] Being thus ſeparated from Iſrael's ſubſtance, and laid before the Lord, they both evidenced Achan's guilt, and the innocence of the others, that the wrath of the Lord might reſt on him, and be turned away from them.

V. 24. *His ſons*, &c.] This was forbidden to magiſtrates upon their own authority: but all lives are the Lord's, and he can ſet all right in a future ſtate; the ungodly deſerve worſe puniſhment than temporal death, and the righteous are only the ſooner taken to heaven. This circumſtance would be a vehement expreſſion of the exceeding enormity of the offence; and render the example more affecting, and alarming.

V. 25, 26.] It ſeems that they were firſt ſtoned, and then burned; which might denote the anger of God, that beyond death will purſue, and puniſh the impenitent. The heap of ſtones would perpetuate the memory of his ſin, and puniſhment, for the inſtruction of future generations: as would alſo the name given to the place, which ſignifies "trouble." (*Hoſea*, c. ii. v. 15.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When men by their crimes provoke the Lord to anger, he commonly leaves them to their own miſtaken counſels, and thus their own iniquity corrects them. The people of God can never expect to proſper in any undertaking, concerning which they have not inquired of the Lord to know his will, and crave his aſſiſtance; or in which they have indulged ſloth, or vain confidence, or tempted the Lord by expecting his aſſiſtance in the neglect of proper means. But human nature is prone to extremes: like children, we are eaſily elated by a little ſucceſs, and fancy that we ſhall now carry all before us: and when, in order to humble us, and to check the growth of ſelf-confidence, the Lord is pleaſed to throw ſome diſcouragement in our way; we are as eaſily thrown into deſpondency, and induced to forebode the moſt fatal conſequences. Every failure of ſucceſs in ſuch undertakings, as are evidently according to the will of God, and the duty of our place, and ſtation, ſhould cauſe us to humble ourſelves before God, and to flee to his mercy ſeat, to pour out our hearts before him, and inquire wherefore he contendeth with us? to plead his promiſes, and the glory of his great name, as engaged to ſupport that cauſe, which we are endeavouring to promote, whatever becomes of us, and our worthleſs names. But in the very prayers of the beſt of men there is much evil, which the Lord might *juſtly* condemn, and for which he will frequently rebuke, and chaſten them: eſpecially when they appear ungrateful for former mercies, murmuring, or deſponding on account of preſent trials, diſtruſtful of his faithfulneſs, or ſuſpicious of his future intentions reſpecting them. But what ſhall we *then* ſay, "when Iſrael turneth their backs "before their enemies?" It is not enough that the forces be recruited, that the paſſes be ſtrengthened, that the cowards be puniſhed, that the valiant be rewarded, that the

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of ſtones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceneſs of his anger: wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor unto this day.

ſoldiers be animated by word, and deed, and that the enſuing aſſault be conducted with more ſkill, and circumſpection. The matter is not thus: Iſrael hath ſinned, and God is provoked; and nothing can enſure ſucceſs, until his indignation be turned away, and the accurſed thing be removed out of the camp. Times therefore of public danger, and calamity with nations profeſſing Chriſtianity, and the proteſtant religion, ſhould be times of peculiar reformation; notorious criminals ought then to be ſearched out, and brought to condign puniſhment, eſpecially ſuch as have enriched themſelves by ſacrilege, by perjury, by murder, oppreſſion, and iniquitous traffic. And whilſt ſuch criminals are connived at, and ſuffered to eſcape with impunity: yea, until ſomewhat effectual hath been done towards expiating national guilt, by the execution of public juſtice, on thoſe whoſe daring crimes, have brought the wrath of God on a guilty land, there is no cauſe to wonder, that they turn their backs upon their enemies, and little hope that God will be with them any more, notwithſtanding all their faſtings and prayers. And ſince theſe things have been ſo much difregarded in proteſtant countries, they have been left to quarrel with one another; and to become the inſtruments of each other's correction, inſtead of being united, and proſpering in repelling the aſſaults of their common enemies. But may it not alſo be ſeriouſly queſtioned whether the caſe be not the ſame with reſpect of the ſucceſs of the preached goſpel, and the ſtate of religion amongſt us? It is to be feared that there hath been ſometimes more zeal ſhewn in ſupporting the intereſts of one party, againſt thoſe of other parties, than the intereſts of vital Godlineſs, againſt thoſe of infidelity, profligacy, and formal profeſſion: and that the favour, and concurrence of many a covetous Achan, has not only been accepted of, but aſſiduouſly ſought after, and with competition. Still more evidently doth it appear that there hath not always been due care taken to cenſure, and proteſt againſt, or exclude ſuch profeſſors, who are evidently the ſlaves of avarice, worldly luſts, and the pride of life; and to direct the ſearching word of God to their conſciences, in ſuch a manner, as *effectually* to make them underſtand, that their profeſſion of the doctrines of the goſpel, their attendance on the ordinances, and ſupport of the miniſters of God, will never ſave their ſouls, unleſs their idols be dethroned, and their hearts and lives renewed, by the converting grace of God. It is to be apprehended that there are ſome Achans in our congregations, whoſe lives prejudice men's minds againſt the truth, and bring a ſecret blaſt upon our miniſtry; nor will the Lord be with us any more, as he hath been with others before us, unleſs we do our beſt endeavours, without any partial, or perſonal regards, to ſeparate from amongſt us. And it is propoſed as a matter of ſerious inquiry, whether the preſent lamentable diviſions amongſt the profeſſors of ſerious Godlineſs; the confeſſedly ſmall ſucceſs of the preached goſpel, compared with that of former times; and the moſt alarming progreſs of open infidelity, be not in great meaſure to be aſcribed to the ſame cauſe, as Iſrael's defeat before Ai. But firſt of all we ſhould look at home, into our own hearts, and into our own houſes; and make diligent ſearch, whether there be not ſome accurſed thing there, which God ſees, and abhors; ſome unmortified luſt, ſome iniquitous gain, "put amongſt "our own ſtuff;" ſome withholding from God, and the poor their dues, in order to gratify avarice, or ſupport the expence of luxury, and the pride of life. If this be the caſe, no wonder we do not proſper in our ſouls, or in our miniſtry; no wonder if we get no benefit from our attendance upon ordinances, nor ſee any conſiderable effects from our unremitted, and moſt earneſt preaching from year to year. Nor can we expect to proſper any better, until the accurſed thing be deſtroyed out of our hearts, and removed out of our habitations, and forſaken in our lives. Nor muſt we only be careful that we ourſelves do not diſſemble any ſecret iniquity; but muſt remember that we are accountable for our families alſo, if we do not uſe all our circumſpection, and exert our authority to preſerve them free from every accurſed thing. In this way will Iſrael proſper, our ſouls will be like a watered garden, (*Iſaiah*, c. lviii. v. 11.) and the word of God will have free courſe, and be glorified, our God will be with us, and fight for us, and Iſrael ſhall no more turn their backs upon their enemies. Would we avoid the commiſſion of groſs iniquity, we muſt make a covenant with our eyes, and with all our ſenſes; we muſt learn to behold every ſurrounding object by faith, through the medium of God's word, not by ſenſe, through the medium of a worldly judgment, and a carnal mind: we muſt repreſs the firſt movings of concupiſcence in our hearts, and pray earneſtly, not to be led into temptation; we muſt habituate ourſelves to meditate upon the future conſequences of ſinful gratifications, to our characters, families, connexions, and temporal intereſts; to our conſcience, peace, and eternal concerns; to the church of God, and to the world around us; and to place ourſelves, by an effort of the imagination, in thoſe very circumſtances, in which we ſhall be, when the ſin is committed, and the infatuation is vaniſhed; and to conſider what our judgments, and feelings in that caſe would be. We ſhould alſo treat all expectations of ſecrecy, and impunity, as the deluſions of ſatan, and ſhould beware of hypocriſy: from our judge we can conceal nothing; and ſecreting our offences from our fellow criminals will avail us very little, and we may be ſure our iniquity will at length find us out. We ſhould alſo accuſtom ourſelves to ſelf-denial, and patient waiting; for the bleſſings, which God reſerves for his people, are like fruit, which will be wholeſome, when it hath had time to ripen, but will certainly be noxious, if greedily ſeized before the proper ſeaſon. When we are conſcious, that we have ſinned, we ſhould without delay confeſs our guilt fully, and ingenuouſly; and if the matter requires it, we ſhould glorify God and take ſhame to ourſelves, by an open acknowledgment of our crimes, and juſtify him, in all the temporal puniſhments, which we endure: for, bleſſed be his name, through him, who was made a curſe for us, all manner of ſins, and blaſphemies ſhall be forgiven to the true believer. But even, when final condemnation is eſcaped, what terrible effects doth ſin produce! What fatal conſequences often enſue in this world to the ſinner himſelf, and to all belonging to, or connected with him! How one ſinner deſtroyeth much good! What

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Lord inſtructing and encouraging Joſhua, about the taking of Ai, v. 1—2. 2d. That city beſieged and taken; the ſlaughter of the inhabitants, the city burned, the ſpoil divided, and the king executed, v. 3—29. 3d. The appointed ſacrifices offered; and the bleſſings, and curſes proclaimed from mount Gerizzim, and mount Ebal, v. 30—35.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Fear not, neither be thou diſmayed; take all the people of war with thee, and ariſe, go up to Ai: ſee, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.

2 And thou ſhalt do to Ai and her king, as thou didſt unto Jericho and her king: only the ſpoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, ſhall ye take for a prey unto yourſelves. Lay thee an ambuſh for the city behind it.

3 So Joſhua aroſe, and all the people of war, to go up againſt Ai: and Joſhua choſe out thirty thouſand mighty men of valour, and ſent them away by night.

4 And he commanded them, ſaying, Behold, ye ſhall lie in wait againſt the city, *even* behind the city; go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready:

5 And I, and all the people that *are* with me, will approach unto the city: and it ſhall come to paſs, when they come out againſt us as at the firſt, that we will flee before them,

6 (For they will come out after us,) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will ſay, They flee before us, as at the firſt: therefore we will flee before them.

7 Then ye ſhall riſe up from the ambuſh, and ſeize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

8 And it ſhall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye ſhall ſet the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD ſhall ye do. See, I have commanded you.

9 Joſhua therefore ſent them forth; and they went to lie in ambuſh, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the weſt ſide of Ai: but Joſhua lodged that night among the people.

10 And Joſhua roſe up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Iſrael, before the people to Ai.

11 And all the people, *even the people* of war that *were* with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north ſide of Ai: now *there was* a valley between them and Ai.

12 And he took about five thouſand men, and ſet them to lie in ambuſh between Beth-el and Ai, on the weſt ſide of the city.

13 And when they had ſet the people, *even* all the hoſt that *was* on the north of the city,

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will then be the wrath to come? let us take warning, and without delay flee from it to Jeſus Chriſt, the ſinner's friend. Finally, though atrocious criminals ſhould be puniſhed with unrelenting firmneſs, and all ſhould unite in their proteſt againſt their crimes; yet their miſery ſhould not be inſulted, nor their immortal ſouls forgotten: but calm expoſtulations, ſerious inſtructions, and compaſſionate exhortations ſhould unite to bring them to repentance, that they may obtain mercy from God in a future world: and every method ſhould be adopted, which can render the example of public juſtice productive of as deep, and durable an impreſſion upon the minds of the ſurvivors, as poſſible.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *Lay thee an ambuſh*, &c.] This ſtratagem of war was of God's own appointment: the war was not only lawful but holy; and it was equally lawful to outwit, as to overpower their enemies. No treaties were hereby violated, no oaths broken, no falſehoods uttered; and it cannot be requiſite to inform our enemies of our intentions, and purpoſes, however they may be deceived by appearances. But infractions of treaties, lies, perjuries, &c, cannot in any war, or in any caſe be allowable, or excuſable. Jericho had been taken by miracle, without the people's danger or fatigue, in order to teach them to depend on, and to give God the glory of all their ſucceſs. But they were diſpoſed to infer that they might deſpiſe their enemies, and indulge themſelves; and that the Lord would fight for them, without their interference. They were therefore in the next inſtance to be inſtructed, that diligence, ſelf-denial, and the exertion of all their powers both of body and mind was required of them, in order to attain ſucceſs. The whole force of Iſrael was therefore commanded to march againſt this ſmall city, and an ambuſhment was alſo to be formed: yet when all was done, they were taught to depend upon the Lord to deliver it into their hands, and to acknowledge him in it, as much, as in the caſe of Jericho.

V. 7—12. *Five thouſand*, &c.] There is much difficulty in determining from this narrative, whether the thirty thouſand men before mentioned aſſaulted the city openly, whilſt only theſe five thouſand lay in ambuſh: or whether the whole force of Iſrael appeared in arms againſt Ai, and the thirty thouſand formed an ambuſhment, and the five thouſand formed a ſecond ambuſhment, or were ſent to join them. But the matter is not important, and hath nothing to do with our edification.

and their liers in wait on the weſt of the city, Joſhua went that night into the midſt of the valley.

14 And it came to paſs, when the king of Ai ſaw *it*, that they haſted and roſe up early, and the men of the city went out againſt Iſrael to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wiſt not that *there were* liers in ambuſh againſt him behind the city.

15 And Joſhua and all Iſrael made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderneſs.

16 And all the people that *were* in Ai were called together to purſue after them: and they purſued after Joſhua, and were drawn away from the city.

17 And there was not a man left in Ai, or Beth-el, that went not out after Iſrael: and they left the city open, and purſued after Iſrael.

18 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Stretch out the ſpear that *is* in thy hand toward Ai: for I will give it into thine hand. And Joſhua ſtretched out the ſpear that *he had* in his hand toward the city.

19 And the ambuſh aroſe quickly out of their place, and they ran as ſoon as he had ſtretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and haſted, and ſet the city on fire.

20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they ſaw, and behold, the ſmoke of the city aſcended up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderneſs turned back upon the purſuers.

21 And when Joſhua and all Iſrael ſaw that the ambuſh had taken the city, and that the ſmoke of the city aſcended, then they turned again, and ſlew the men of Ai.

22 And the other iſſued out of the city againſt them; ſo they were in the midſt of Iſrael, ſome on this ſide, and ſome on that ſide: and they ſmote them, ſo that they let none of them remain or eſcape.

23 And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joſhua.

24 And it came to paſs, when Iſrael had made an end of ſlaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderneſs wherein they chaſed them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the ſword until they were conſumed, that all the Iſraelites returned unto Ai, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword.

25 And *ſo* it was, *that* all that fell that day, both of men and women, *were* twelve thouſand, *even* all the men of Ai.

26 For Joſhua drew not his hand back, wherewith he ſtretched out the ſpear, until he had utterly deſtroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27 Only the cattle, and the ſpoil of that city, Iſrael took for a prey unto themſelves, according unto the word of the LORD, which he commanded Joſhua.

28 And Joſhua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, *even* a deſolation unto this day.

29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until even tide: and as ſoon as the ſun was

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V. 17. *There was not a man*, &c.] Greater infatuation cannot be imagined than this was: upon ſuch a trifling advantage, as the former, and upon ſo ſlight an appearance of further ſucceſs, to leave the city defenceleſs, that they might purſue ſuch a numerous army! But they were left to be blinded by pride, obſtinacy, and rage againſt Iſrael, to their more ſpeedy deſtruction. The king, and people of Beth-el appear to have been confederate with thoſe of Ai, and to have been ſubdued and deſtroyed at the ſame time.

V. 26. *Wherewith he*, &c.] Joſhua ſtretched forth his hand with the ſpear, at God's command, as a ſignal to thoſe, who lay in ambuſh, and as a token of the divine aſſiſtance: and he appears to have remained upon ſome eminence in the ſight of the Iſraelites, and to have perſevered in the ſame ſignal, till all the enemies were deſtroyed. Thus Joſhua conquered by ſeeming to yield: which hath been accommodated to Chriſt, when by yielding to death he overcame him, who had the power of death, deprived the king of terrors of his power to hurt his people, and prepared the way for the utter deſtruction of this laſt enemy.

V. 27. *Only the cattle*, &c.] We may ſuppoſe that this was divided according to the example before given, (*Num.* c. xxxi. v. 27, 28—47;) or by ſome other equitable and regular method of proceeding. Thus the people began to receive a gracious recompenſe for their ſelf-denial in refraining from the devoted ſpoil of Jericho: whilſt Achan received the juſt puniſhment of his ſacrilege.

V. 29. *He hanged on a tree*, &c.] The kings of Canaan were under the ſame curſe, as their ſubjects, and probably more deeply criminal: and the reſerving of the king of Ai for a more ſolemn execution, would tend to ſtrike down,

down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.

30 Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal;

31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace-offerings.

32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side, before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizzim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

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terror into the rest of them, would contribute to the success of the Israelites, and give the whole the greater appearance of a judicial process, and of the executing of the Lord's vengeance upon his enemies. As Israel acted by a peculiar commission, none of their conduct can be drawn into precedent.

V. 30—35.] (*See Notes*, &c. *Deut.* c. xxvii.) As soon as ever Joshua had access to the mountains, which the Lord by Moses had appointed, without delay, and without regarding the unsettled state of Israel, or the machinations of their enemies, he proceeded to ratify the covenant of the Lord with his people: by building the occasional altar, and offering the instituted sacrifices; writing the abstracts of the law on the plastered stones; proclaiming the blessings and curses from the two mountains according to the prescribed form; and reading over himself the whole law to the people. Thus by the precepts of the law sin is detected; by its curses, the desert, and danger of the sinner are discovered; in the sacrifice of Christ the self-condemned transgressor finds pardon, and peace; and enjoying the comfort of communion with God, manifests his faith, and love by walking in the ways of chearful obedience; and in this manner obtains, and enjoys the blessings of the new covenant of mercy and grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When sin is repented of, and put away as an accursed thing with abhorrence, we may expect encouragement, assistance, and a blessing from our reconciled God and Father: and the more we fear God with filial reverence, and are afraid of offending him, the less need we fear what man can do unto us; and with the greater confidence may we expect success in our spiritual warfare, and in our zealous endeavours to serve God, and to promote the prosperity of his people. When we *truly believe, and rightly understand* that "without the Lord we can do nothing," and that our sufficiency and success must come from him, and all the glory be rendered unto him, we shall be far from lying down in supineness, and self-indulgent sloth: on the contrary, we shall be excited to use every commanded, and allowable means, which we can devise, with all our might; and to seek the help, and blessing from the Lord, to render them effectual. The former inference is satan's comment, approved by the carnal heart, and suited to it's disposition: the latter is according to the general tenor of the word of God, which every where calls upon us to strive, labour, and give diligence; and is approved of by every heaven-born soul, as the proper practical deduction from the important, but humbling truth. For this is the language of common sense, in all other concerns, that the less we can do to help ourselves, in a matter of importance, the more occasion have we to seek the help, and to observe the directions of those, who are able, and disposed to assist us. Thus also the Lord applies his salvation to our souls, by stirring us up, through his preventing grace, to be diligent in the use of appointed means, and through those means communicating all sufficiency for every good work, (Phil. c. ii. v. 12, 13.) In this way to be diligent, and earnest with all our heart, and soul in seeking salvation, resisting temptation, and striving against sin, is true Christian wisdom, and the due medium, betwixt the extremes to which human nature is propense. In every undertaking prudent counsel is as conducive to success, as vigorous exertion; and on some occasions well-timed yielding secures the advantage better than pertinacious opposition. They, who honour the Lord with their substance, and are not in haste to be rich, will eventually be no losers by their liberal obedience, and patient waiting; though Christians must tarry until they arrive at the heavenly Canaan, before they receive their full reward: there will they enjoy their everlasting portion, when that of worldlings will be all spent, and their souls in utter misery: (*Luke* c. xvi. v. 19—31.) And indeed the prosperity of fools destroys them, and their short-lived presumptuous rejoicing will speedily issue in lamentations and mourning and woe: and as the Lord gives wisdom to those, whom he loves, and will prosper; so he infatuates those, who have filled up the measure of

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The kings of Canaan confederating againſt Iſrael, v. 1—2. 2d. The Gibeonites beguiling Joſhua into a covenant of peace, v. 3—15. 3d. The Iſraelites detecting the impoſture, yet ſparing their lives, and reducing them to bondage, to which they willingly conſented, v. 16—27.

AND it came to paſs, when all the kings which *were* on this ſide Jordan, in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coaſts of the great ſea over againſt Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebuſite, heard *thereof*,

2 That they gathered themſelves together to fight with Joſhua, and with Iſrael, with one accord.

3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joſhua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

4 They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambaſſadors; and

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their iniquity. Our duty is to reverence the aged, to honour thoſe, who are placed in authority over us, and to compaſſionate the weak and the helpleſs, the feebler ſex, and the tender age: but the Judge of all the earth will involve all impenitent ſinners in one common condemnation, without any other diſtinction, than that of their different degrees of guilt: by which rule, they, who have abuſed the greateſt abilities, riches, or authority, will be only diſtinguiſhed by the larger meaſure of divine vengeance. However buſy, unſettled, or expoſed we are, our God, and our religion muſt have our firſt attention; ſeeking firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, all things elſe ſhall be added unto us. In doing this we muſt reſt our hope upon the atonement of the great Redeemer, according to the goſpel of our ſalvation; and keep the holy law of God continually before our eyes, as the rule of our evangelical obedience: we muſt remember the awful curſes of the old covenant, to quicken our pace in fleeing to the refuge, which is appointed us; and to keep alive the ſalutary fears of coming ſhort of it; (*Heb.* c. iv. v. 1;) and to reſtrain us from ſin in an hour of temptation: (*Luke* c. xii. v. 4, 5:) and we muſt embrace and plead in prayer the precious promiſes of the new covenant for our encouragement, in denying ourſelves, and bearing the croſs. In the ſame important ſubjects we muſt inſtruct our families, and train up our children; and ſpeak of them freely even to ſtrangers, who are converſant amongſt us. And it is happy for them, who begin early in life to attend to theſe needful concerns; that in their declining age, (ſhould they live ſo long,) they may look back with comfort to their early engagements, and the unnumbered benefits, which have reſulted from them.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *Heard thereof*, &c.] In general they had heard, that the Iſraelites had paſſed over Jordan, and commenced hoſtilities; in particular they had heard of the deſtruction of Jericho, and Ai, and of their ſolemn covenanting with the Lord, as if already in poſſeſſion of the land. Had they not been intimidated, and infatuated, they would with combined force have oppoſed their paſſage over Jordan: but after all the miracles, which had been wrought, an accommodation, if poſſible, was the only thing, which they could reaſonably attempt: from this they were withheld by a deſperate obſtinacy, and rage; being ripe for deſtruction they were left to be hardened, and blinded to ruſh upon it of their own accord.

V. 3. *The inhabitants of Gibeon*, &c.] The Gibeonites had heard of the deſtruction of Jericho, and Ai, with the ſlaughter of all the inhabitants, as well as the former miracles, wrought in Egypt, and more recently in the deſtruction of Og and Bathan, with their ſubjects. They had alſo learned that the Iſraelites were commanded to deſtroy all the inhabitants of the land, without entering into any league with, or giving any quarter to them; and that the Lord had promiſed to give them the victory over them all. The other inhabitants of the land had heard the ſame; but they were only exaſperated, and rendered the more determined in their oppoſition by theſe reports: but the Gibeonites, or at leaſt ſome of their leading men, (for we read not that they were governed by a king,) were induced to believe that the word of the Lord would certainly be accompliſhed, and that all oppoſition to the Iſraelites would be unavailing: moved therefore with the fear of impending deſtruction, they conſidered, that the only proſpect of ſafety lay in an accommodation with Iſrael upon any terms. Had they caſt themſelves without reſerve upon the mercy of Iſrael, and of Iſrael's God, there is no doubt but they would have been ſpared, as Rahab, and her relations were: for though the Lord would not allow the people to make exceptions to his general rule of deſtroying the Canaanites, for their own eaſe, and emolument, by forming alliances with them continuing idolaters: yet in this, and in all other caſes, he was ready to make exceptions to his threatenings, in favour of thoſe who repented, and truſted in his mercy. But not being acquainted with this limitation, and interpreting the general command in it's utmoſt rigour, they deſpaired of being preſerved, if they were detected; yet they conceived an idea, that if they could bring the rulers of Iſrael under the bond of an oath, though the effect of a deception, that oath would ſecure them from being put to death. Accordingly they formed a ſtratagem, which cannot be vindicated, but may admit of ſome excuſe from their imminent danger, and from their ignorance of God, and of his law; in which they ſucceeded according to their expectation.

V. 4. *Ambaſſadors*, &c.] It is likely that theſe were the chief perſons amongſt them, but they profeſſed themſelves the ambaſſadors of ſome foreign princes: and, according to the cuſtoms of thoſe days, when inns at regular ſtages were not known, and conſequently men took with them all their proviſions for their journey, as we do for a voyage, they fitted themſelves out in ſuch a manner, that they appeared to have come from a very diſtant country,

took

took old ſacks upon their aſſes, and wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

5 And old ſhoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their proviſion was dry *and* mouldy.

6 And they went to Joſhua unto the camp at Gilgal, and ſaid unto him, and to the men of Iſrael, We be come from a far country; now therefore make ye a league with us.

7 And the men of Iſrael ſaid unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how ſhall we make a league with you?

8 And they ſaid unto Joſhua, We *are* thy ſervants. And Joſhua ſaid unto them, Who *are* ye? and from whence come ye?

9 And they ſaid unto him, From a very far country thy ſervants are come, becauſe of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.

10 And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that *were* beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heſhbon, and to Og king of Baſhan, which *was* at Aſhtaroth.

11 Wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, ſpake to us, ſaying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and ſay unto them, We *are* your ſervants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

12 This our bread we took hot *for* our proviſion out of our houſes on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

13 And theſe bottles of wine which we filled, *were* new; and behold they be rent; and theſe our garments and our ſhoes are become old, by reaſon of the very long journey.

14 And the men took of their victuals, and aſked not *counſel* at the mouth of the LORD.

15 And Joſhua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation ſware unto them.

16 And it came to paſs at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbours, and *that* they dwelt among them.

17 And the children of Iſrael journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.

18 And the children of Iſrael ſmote them not, becauſe the princes of the congregation had ſworn unto them by the LORD God of Iſrael. And all the congregation murmured againſt the princes.

19 But

and they pretended that their proviſions were either exhauſted or ſpoiled by the length of their journey, and even their clothes and veſſels worn out.—We may be ſure the ſeveral circumſtances were artfully deviſed, and appeared very plauſible to Joſhua and Iſrael, though we cannot well judge of them by modern manners and cuſtoms.

V. 9, 10.] The ambaſſadors meant to induce the Iſraelites to believe, that they had never heard the name of their country, becauſe of its great diſtance: but that their countrymen had ſo far off heard the report of the works which God had wrought for his people, in deſolating Egypt and bringing them forth thence, and in deſtroying before them the kings of the Amorites: that theſe reports had ſo impreſſed their minds, that they were deſirous of amity with them upon any terms: that for this purpoſe they themſelves had undertaken ſo very fatiguing a journey: and that the nation was willing to become their ſervants and tributaries, if they might in return have ſecurity, that they ſhould not be deſtroyed at any future period by the increaſing power and ſpreading dominion of Iſrael. At the ſame time they artfully avoided any mention of the paſſage of the Iſraelites over Jordan, and the deſtruction of Jericho and Ai; as willing it ſhould be underſtood, that they had not yet heard of theſe more recent miracles and ſucceſſes. The addreſs was well calculated to inſinuate itſelf into the minds of the Iſraelites, who would be exceedingly gratified with the thought of being a people of ſuch renown, that their power was dreaded, and their friendſhip courted by diſtant nations: and the favour of Joſhua, and of the more pious among them would be conciliated by the reſpectful mention which they made of the name and works of the Lord; eſpecially as it had been foretold that theſe miracles ſhould have this effect. (*Exod.* ix. 16.)

V. 14, 15.] Joſhua and the elders, having examined the proviſions of the pretended ambaſſadors, haſtily concluded, that the ſtate of them corroborated the account which they had given, and without any further heſitation entered into league with them, as repreſentatives of their people, and by oath engaged not to deſtroy them. This precipitated treaty, entered into with ſtrangers, to which they had little inducement except flattering words and fair ſpeeches, was the effect of great credulity and impolicy: but the chief fault of Joſhua and of the princes was, that they did not aſk counſel of the Lord, in a matter of ſuch importance, when the means of ſo doing was always preſent with them. But the Lord over-ruled it for good, though not without rendering them aſhamed of ſuffering themſelves to be thus impoſed on.

V. 18. *Murmured*, &c.] The people murmured be-

19 But all the princes ſaid unto all the congregation, We have ſworn unto them by the LORD God of Iſrael: now therefore, we may not touch them.

20 This we will do to them; we will even let them live, leſt wrath be upon us, becauſe of the oath which we ſware unto them.

21 And the princes ſaid unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promiſed them.

22 And Joſhua called for them, and he ſpake unto them ſaying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, ſaying, We *are* very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

23 Now therefore ye *are* curſed; and there ſhall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the houſe of my God.

24 And they anſwered Joſhua, and ſaid, Becauſe it was certainly told thy ſervants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his ſervant Moſes to give you all the land, and to deſtroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were ſore afraid of our lives becauſe of you, and have done this thing.

25 And now, behold, we *are* in thine hand: as it ſeemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

26 And ſo did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Iſrael, that they ſlew them not.

27 And Joſhua made them that day hewers

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cauſe they were reſtrained from taking immediate poſſeſſion of theſe cities, and from plundering them; yet we have reaſon to conclude that they poſſeſſed them afterwards; for we find them mentioned in the diviſion of the land; (xv. 60. xviii. 25, 26.)

V. 20. *Becauſe of the oath*, &c.] Had the oath been in itſelf unlawful, it would not have been binding; for no obligation can render it our duty to commit a ſin. But it was not in itſelf unlawful to ſpare the lives of thoſe Canaanites, who, without having attempted to aſſault the Iſraelites, or ever intending to do it, entirely ſubmitted to them and renounced their idolatry, deſiring only that their lives might be ſpared on any terms. The princes of Iſrael had indeed been impoſed upon by a falſe pretext; but they had ſolemnly engaged by oath to the deputies of Gibeon, that they would let the people live from whom they came; they were themſelves faulty in engaging ſo raſhly in this matter, and were not allowed to violate the oath, though it was to their own hurt; (*Pſalm*, xv. 4.) It is evident that God approved of their conduct in keeping this oath; and was diſpleaſed with Saul when he long afterward infringed it; (*Note*, &c. 2 *Sam.* xxi. 1—3.) So that even in the war, which by ſpecial commiſſion Iſrael waged againſt the accurſed Canaanites, the infraction of ſolemn treaties and the violation of ſolemn oaths were not allowed. This deſerves the ſerious conſideration of thoſe, who are concerned in the government of ſtates and kingdoms; where politicians are ſeldom found ſo ſcrupulous, as theſe princes of Iſrael were, when intereſt, and popular prejudice or clamour unite to tempt them to break through ſuch obligations. And if there were any heretics more certainly devoted to deſtruction than the accurſed Canaanites; none but antichriſt would conclude that no faith was to be obſerved with them, or that the moſt ſolemn oaths ſworn to them might be diſpenſed with! But if the deception, that the Gibeonites practiſed, did not diſſolve the obligation under which the princes of Iſrael had brought themſelves; the ſimplicity, ſincerity, and honeſty of thoſe with whom we are connected, ſhould be conſidered as an additional bond on our conſcience, to be ſcrupulouſly exact and punctual in all our dealings with them.

V. 23. *Ye are curſed*, &c.] The original curſe pronounced upon the deſcendents of Canaan was, that they ſhoud be *the ſervants of ſervants*: if the Gibeonites therefore have their lives ſpared, in regard to the oath of God, (which was all that was engaged for;) they muſt conſent to become not only tributaries, but the meaneſt ſlaves to Iſrael; eſpecially as they had beguiled them, and therefore could not expect to have a treaty fraudulently obtained, interpreted in any other than the ſtricteſt ſenſe. If then they would conſent to become hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation, and eſpecially to the prieſts and Levites, without excepting even the chief men among them, their lives ſhould indeed be ſpared. Theſe muſt have appeared very humiliating and rigorous terms, when we conſider, "that Gibeon was as one of the "royal cities, and all the men thereof were mighty." But they readily acquieſced; which ſhewed how much in earneſt they were, and how deſirous upon any terms to eſcape the doom of the Canaanites, and to make an accommodation with Iſrael: and it forms a conſiderable proof, that the managing men at leaſt in the whole tranſaction were actuated by faith and the fear of God, notwithſtanding all the intermixture of evil they were betrayed into: and it very aptly repreſented many things, which take place in the converſion of ſinners to Jeſus Chriſt.—Accordingly, their cities and lands ſeem to have been afterwards ceded to the Iſraelites, nor was any of them freed from being bondmen: and as the Iſraelites were not allowed to keep any perpetual ſlaves, but of other nations; ſo the Gibeonites were made the ſlaves of the prieſts and Levites, to do the meaneſt and hardeſt work belonging to the ſanctuary ſervice, under the name of *Nethinims*. Thus was the matter ſettled to the ſatisfaction of all parties: the people were ſatisfied with having their eſtates, and the benefit of their ſervices in the ſanctuary; and whilſt they continued together, for themſelves alſo. The prieſts and Levites had a valuable acquiſition, and would not only be exempted from much hard labour, but ſet at liberty to attend more devotedly

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ers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he ſhould chooſe.

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to their proper work: (*Note, Acts*, vi. 2—4:) The Gibeonites preſerved their lives; and though laid under a preſent rebuke for their prevarication, the appointment was over-ruled for their great advantage, by their being brought into the courts of the Lord, and ſo favourably employed for the good of their ſouls; and inſtead of being deſtroyed as *accurſed from God*, they were admitted into his ſervice as *wholly devoted to him*. The tranſaction had a very favourable aſpect upon the Gentile nations, and pre-intimated their admiſſion into the church.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt the people of God are moſt zealouſly engaged in their devotions, their enemies are peculiarly inſtigated by Satan to confederate againſt them: but they, who aſſociate themſelves againſt thoſe that are devoted to the ſervice of God, will only the more ſpeedily be broken in pieces: (*Iſai.* viii. 9.) And though the conduct of the enemies of true religion is both hateful and infatuated: yet frequently their unanimity may ſuggeſt a profitable hint to the people of God; to ſhame them out of their *inteſtine* contentions and diſputes, and inſtruct them to unite in oppoſing the incurſions of their common enemies.—It is a great bleſſing for a people to be under the government of thoſe who in any degree fear God, and are anxious to avert his impending wrath from a guilty land, and to adopt ſincere and deciſive meaſures for that purpoſe: ſuch will eſcape, when others are hurried on into deſtruction, by hardened, obſtinate, and atheiſtical rulers. For the ſame warnings and promiſes of God's word, and the ſame reports of his mercy to his people and the judgments upon his enemies, which move ſome to flee from the wrath to come, and to ſeek ſhelter from the threatening ſtorm; only irritate the enmity and increaſe the deſperation of others: and every thing good, or tending to good, cometh from God, to whom belongeth all the praiſe. But when the conſciences of ſinners are firſt alarmed with the dread of wrath, and filled with the anguiſh of bitter remorſe, they are generally actuated by a ſpirit of bondage; and being greatly ignorant of God, of his law, and of his goſpel of rich grace abounding to the chief of ſinners; they frequently ſeek relief by ſuch methods, as only ſerve to increaſe their guilt and involve them the more: and their carnal contrivances and falſe dependences are ſeldom free from aſſumed appearances and hypocritical pretences, by which they attempt to impoſe upon others and actually impoſe upon themſelves. But when men are really in earneſt to eſcape the wrath of God, they will not long be left to reſt in forms and falſe refuges, but will appear in the midſt of all, willing to venture, ſuffer, and ſtoop to any thing in order to obtain ſalvation: and though the Lord Jeſus (the true Joſhua) ſees through every diſguiſe, and abhors all iniquity, he will not reject even ſuch ſinners as theſe, either on account of their former crimes, or of the manifeſt evil which pollutes their endeavours for ſalvation: but he will reprove them, and convince them of their guilt; he will bring them to repentance, and gradually purify them from thoſe evils; he will take them off from all their falſe dependences, and ſhame them out of their ſecret hypocriſy; he will teach them to truſt in, and make them partakers of, his mercy; he will ſave their ſouls and make them his ſervants: and though he correct them for their ſins, or allot them a low ſtation and hard ſervice in his church; yet he will teach them to acquieſce, and be thankful, and readily to ſay, "behold we are in thy hand: "as it ſeemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us do." Thus that which is begun with a very large portion of evil, may end well; and ſinners who were under an awful curſe, may by grace be made a bleſſing. And to exchange the higheſt ſtation in the world, for the meaneſt place amongſt the ſervants and in the courts of the Lord, though it appear a degradation, and a trial, is indeed a very great preferment; and will appear ſo in due ſeaſon.—Flattering words and plauſible pretences to religion are apt to induce even wiſe and good men too eaſily to lay aſide ſuſpicion, and to give countenance to impoſture: nor do any act prudently, who proceed with ſuch precipitation as not to take time to conſult the Lord. But he over-rules many things for his own glory, and the advantage of his church, which are not done according to his commandments, and conſequently are not examples for us to imitate.—Though we have been impoſed upon, we muſt not think ourſelves at liberty to retaliate: ſolemn engagements entered into, even to our hurt, muſt be conſcientiouſly adhered to: and much allowance ſhould be made for thoſe, whoſe minds are diſquieted with the fear of impending ruin, and who have not enjoyed the advantage of good inſtruction. But if men, in order to ſave their lives, are conſidered as acting reaſonably, when they renounce all their intereſts, ſtoop to any conceſſions, accept of any terms, and become willing to endure any hardſhips: how reaſonable muſt it be for us to be influenced by the fear of eternal puniſhment, and the hope of everlaſting life; to renounce the world, to mortify our luſts, to deny ourſelves, to ſubmit to the croſs; to humble and abaſe ourſelves in the very duſt before God; to "count all but dung, that we may "win Chriſt and be found in him:" to be in haſte to have the covenant of peace ratified to our ſouls; to cut off the offending limb, and to pluck out the offending eye; and in ſhort to yield up ourſelves to the Lord without reſerve, craving only that our ſouls may be ſaved, and that he would make us his ſervants, though in the loweſt place, and though called to endure the greateſt hardſhips? In coming thus unto the Saviour we do not proceed upon a *peraduenture:* we are invited to draw nigh, and we are aſſured that "him, that cometh to him, he will in no wiſe "caſt out." And even thoſe things, which ſound harſh, and are humiliating, and form very ſharp trials of our ſincerity, will in the event prove the ſources both of real advantage and of ſtrong conſolation. But let us look to it, that we come and cleave to the Lord with an upright heart. We hope indeed that many of the Gibeonites were true believers, though not native Iſraelites: but we are ſure, that many, who preach, and write, and labour very diligently, and even uſefully to others, are only hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation of the Lord, and have no inheritance in Iſrael, but are themſelves caſtaways.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Five kings confederating againſt Gibeon, 1—5. 2d. Joſhua, at Gibeon's requeſt, attacking, overcoming, and deſtroying their armies; whilſt the Lord ſlew ſtill greater numbers by hailſtones, and cauſed the ſun and moon to ſtay their courſe till the victory was completed: their kings taken priſoners, and put to death, 6—27. 3d. The conqueſt of ſeveral cities and countries, and the return of Iſrael to Gilgal, 28—43.

NOW it came to paſs, when Adoni-zedec king of Jeruſalem had heard how Joſhua had taken Ai, and had utterly deſtroyed it; (as he had done to Jericho and her king, ſo he had done to Ai and her king;) and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Iſrael, and were among them;

2 That they feared greatly, becauſe Gibeon *was* a great city, as one of the royal cities, and becauſe it *was* greater than Ai, and all the men thereof *were* mighty.

3 Wherefore Adoni-zedec king of Jeruſalem ſent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachiſh, and unto Debir king of Eglon, ſaying,

4 Come up unto me, and help me, that we may ſmite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joſhua, and with the children of Iſrael.

5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jeruſalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachiſh, the king of Eglon, gathered themſelves together, and went up, they and all their hoſts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war againſt it.

6 And the men of Gibeon ſent unto Joſhua to the camp to Gilgal, ſaying, Slack not thy hand from thy ſervants; come up to us quickly, and ſave us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together againſt us.

7 So Joſhua aſcended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thine hand: there ſhall not a man of them ſtand before thee.

9 Joſhua therefore came unto them ſuddenly, *and* went up from Gilgal all night.

10 And the LORD diſcomfited them before Iſrael, and ſlew them with a great ſlaughter at Gibeon, and chaſed them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and ſmote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11 And it came to paſs, as they fled from before Iſrael, *and* were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD caſt down great ſtones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 3. *Wherefore Adoni-zedec*, &c.] The name of this king ſignifies *the lord of righteouſneſs*, and he probably was a deſcendent, as well as ſucceſſor, of Melchizedek, *(the king of righteouſneſs)*, who retained nothing of his progenitor's piety, but the mere name, which his conduct belied.—Whilſt thoſe kings, whoſe dominions lay further north, had confederated againſt Iſrael, and probably were collecting their forces for a general aſſault; the report of Gibeon's alliance with Iſrael prevailed upon theſe five kings, both from fear of the conſequences of ſuch an example, and out of a deſire of revenge, to attack the Gibeonites ſeparately, that they might firſt cruſh them, and intimidate others from imitating them, and ſo might be afterwards the more at liberty to attack the Iſraelites: but they only accelerated and facilitated their own deſtruction.

V. 6. *Sent unto Joſhua*, &c.] The Gibeonites had that confidence in Joſhua and Iſrael, that they did not fear, but they would come to the defence of thoſe whom they had admitted to be their ſervants; for ſubjection entitles to protection: and they had that confidence in the God of Iſrael, that they did doubt of their ſucceſs in the expedition. But they informed Joſhua that no time was to be loſt.—"Come up to us quickly," ſay they, "and ſave us," &c.

V. 7. *From Gilgal*, &c.] The head-quarters of Iſrael were ſtill at Gilgal; there Joſhua left the bulk of the people, doubtleſs with a ſufficient guard; and marched with the men of moſt approved valour to defend the Gibeonites againſt the kings of Canaan.

V. 10. *The Lord diſcomfited*, &c.] Joſhua was an able commander, and headed a numerous army of "mighty "men of valour;" his meaſures were concerted with prudence, and executed with vigour and diſpatch; he marched all night, attacked the enemy at unawares, and doubtleſs his troops behaved well: yet the Lord's promiſe (8.) was his encouragement, and the whole victory is here aſcribed to him.—Their prudence, courage, and ſtrength were from the Lord; he intimidated, and confounded their enemies, and he ſucceeded their meaſures. The ſame holds good in all our undertakings and ſucceſſes, whether in temporal or in ſpiritual things.

V. 11. *Great ſtones*, &c.] Hailſtones of ſuch enormous ſize were ſhowered down from above, and directed in

with hail-stones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD, in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites, before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is* not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14 And there was no day like that, before it, or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

15 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16 But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

17 And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

18 And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:

19 And stay ye not, *but* pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand.

20 And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest *which* remained of them entered into fenced cities.

21 And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22 Then

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in so extraordinary a manner by the Lord, that they smote and slew the fugitive Canaanites in vast multitudes, but fell not upon any of their pursuers! (Notes, &c. *Exod.* ix. 23—26. 29—33.)

V. 12. *Sun, stand,* &c.] Joshua doubtless acted by an immediate impulse upon his mind, from the Spirit of God, on this occasion. First he spake to the Lord in earnest prayer; and then to the sun and moon as by authority from God, commanding those luminaries to stay their course: this was done publicly before all Israel, that they might hear the charge he gave and observe the obedience of these heavenly bodies. It would have been improper for Joshua to have spoken, or the miracle to have been recorded, according to the terms of modern astronomy. The sun appeared to the Israelites over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Ajalon: and there they appeared to be stopped on their course for one whole day; either for the space of about twelve or fourteen hours, or for the time of one diurnal revolution. Many enquiries have been made concerning of the way in which this miracle was wrought, and many difficulties and objections have been urged against understanding it *literally*. But the fact, as far as we are concerned about it, is authenticated by the divine testimony; the manner in which it was accomplished lies entirely out of our province, because beyond our discovery and comprehension. "Is any thing too hard for "the Lord?" This question forms a sufficient answer to ten thousand difficulties, which puny objectors, under the assumed title of philosophers, have in every age been starting against the truth of God in his written word.—The same power, which produced the effect, could prevent all those supposed consequences which are objected: and as we have no records of profane history so ancient as this event, we need not wonder that Pagan authors have not mentioned it.—Though some intimation of it seems given in the fable of Phaeton driving the chariot of the Sun, and throwing all things into disorder; and in some other circumstances stated in a confused and obscure manner in ancient history.—This extraordinary miracle not only gave Israel an opportunity of completing their victory, but rendered Joshua honourable in the eyes of all the people; and both him and them terrible to the surrounding nations. It was moreover a public proclamation that the God of Israel was the God of the whole earth, and of the heavens also, and a protestation against idolatry; whilst the sun and moon, the worship of which formed the most ancient and plausible kind of idolatry, were obedient to the commands of the servants of Jehovah the God of Israel.

V. 13. *Is the,* &c.] *The book of Jasher* seems to have been a collection of records or poems, concerning the chief events of the wars of Israel. In this collection, it is probable that there were further particulars, concerning this miracle; or a poem upon the occasion, to which the sacred writer referred, as being well known among the Israelites. (Notes, &c. *Num.* xxi. 14. 2 *Sam.* i. 18.)

V. 16. *And,* &c.] It is not at all likely that Joshua and all his army should march thirty miles, in the midst of the victory, previously to the pursuit of their vanquished foes, and just after the above-mentioned miracle had been wrought to give them time to complete their destruction. (19.) This verse therefore forms an evident interruption of the narrative; it is not found in some versions; it is *verbatim* the same with the last verse of the chapter, and most probably was misplaced here by the error of some ancient transcribers.

V. 20. *The rest,* &c.] A few stragglers, who escaped the general carnage, got refuge in the fenced cities, but were soon met with there and destroyed.

V. 21. *The camp,* &c.] Probably a camp was prepared at Makkedah for the reception and accommodation

22 Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.

23 And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

24 And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

25 And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong, and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

26 And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

27 And it came to pass, at the time of the going down of the sun, *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

28 And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that *were* therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah:

30 And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein: he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it:

32 And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish: and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.

34 And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him, and they encamped against it, and fought against it:

35 And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword; and all the souls that *were* therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36 And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron, and they fought against it:

37 And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that *were* therein: he left none remaining, (according to all that he had done to Eglon,) but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that *were* therein.

38 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir: and fought against it:

39 And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly

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of the army after the victory, in consequence of the kings being imprisoned in the cave near to it. No mention is made of any Israelite being slain, missing, or wounded, though we are particularly informed of the thirty-six men who were slain before Ai; but they are *all* said to have returned in peace to the camp: so that we may infer, that they were all preserved; and the victory was so complete, that there was none who durst so much as speak a word in contempt or reproach against them. (See *Num.* xxxi. 49.)

V. 24. *Put your feet*, &c.] This action of the Israelitish captains was not intended as an insult over these kings as *their* enemies, but to subscribe, as it were, their condemnation as the hardened enemies of God; as rejoicing in his victory and triumph over them, and as taking encouragement from thence respecting the remaining kings of Canaan. The transaction is also evidently typical of the conquests of the Redeemer, required in by his people; who, in overcoming their spiritual enemies by his help, anticipate that glorious season, when all his and their foes shall be put under his feet.

V. 40.

terly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof, as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.

40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

41 And Joshua smote them from Kad-shbarnea

V. 40. *So*, &c.] When the Israelites had first passed Jordan, they made but slow progress. Jericho was taken by miracle; but the city and all the spoil were either destroyed, or dedicated to sacred uses. They shared the spoil of Ai, but the city was burnt and made an heap. Gibeon surrendered, and was spared. But when their faith, patience, and obedience had been properly proved, their success was more rapid; and they were enriched by the spoil of all these cities, which were preserved for their use; and by the acquisition of all the adjacent country, and its flocks, and herds, and crops, &c.: whilst all the ancient inhabitants were either exterminated or utterly driven away. Yet the Israelites still continued in a body at Gilgal, and did not go to dwell in their cities for the present.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When sinners renounce the service of Satan and the friendship of the world, that they may make their peace with God and join interests with Israel; they must not marvel if the world hate them, if their former friends become their most rancorous foes, and if they meet with unexpected opposition and temptations, with which they have hitherto been unacquainted. By such methods Satan, the god of this world, discourages many, who are convinced of their danger and almost persuaded to be Christians; yet are so afraid of the cross, that they dare not venture to act according to the dictates of their own consciences. But these things should quicken them, in seeking the comfortable assurance that the covenant of peace is ratified with them by a merciful God; in surrendering themselves the more unreservedly to be his servants; and in applying to him for protection, assistance, and deliverance. For the meanest and most feeble of those, who have just begun to trust in and serve the Lord, notwithstanding former crimes, later miscarriages, and present ignorance and infirmities, are equally intitled to his defence, with those who have long and faithfully been his servants.—They, who are enemies to the Lord's people because they belong to him, are adjudged his enemies: nor do any more hasten and augment their own condemnation, than those who combine to impede the progress of true religion, by persecuting such as have embraced it, and intimidating those who appear disposed to embrace it.—No difficulties or dangers need dismay the believer, when in the path of duty and confiding in the Lord: and it is peculiarly incumbent upon us to defend and rescue the oppressed and afflicted, who have exposed themselves to trouble on our account, or for the sake of the gospel, and who look to us for help. In such a cause we ought not to be backward to endure hardship and fatigue, and expose ourselves to loss or inconvenience, without grieving those who depend on our help by needless delays.—The assurance of divine assistance should animate us to action, and to devise and execute every proper plan to ensure success: and when we trust in the Lord, and are disposed to give him the praise, we shall experience assistance, in some measure proportioned to our boldness and diligence.—The sun, moon, and stars in their courses, yea, the whole creation, will fight for the Lord's people against his enemies, though not so miraculously yet as effectually as in the days of Joshua; for all things combine to promote the salvation of the righteous, and the destruction of the wicked. How infatuated then are they, who harden their hearts against that God, whose mandate can arm all the universe to execute his vengeance on his enemies! Though hand join in hand, they cannot escape unpunished! their wisest counsels prove a snare to take themselves withal! their most valiant and vigorous exertions expose their weakness, and issue in disgrace and dismay! their choicest blessings are changed into a curse; and their secure retreats become their prisons or their graves!—Kings and mighty captains, who are disobedient to God, will at last be treated as arch-rebels, to be distinguished only by the deepest infamy and heaviest load of vengeance: and all the Israel of God will join the triumph of the Captain of their salvation, in trampling upon the necks of their proudest opposers, and exclaiming, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:" (*Psalm* cxlix. 6—10.) This will be the final event of all the conflicts betwixt the church of God and its persecutors: but at present we are not called to avenge ourselves upon our enemies, but to forgive, love, pray for, and do good to them; and to endeavour to conquer their hearts with persevering patience and kindness. The Christian's warfare is of another nature: our worst enemies are our own lusts, as in a league with the powers of darkness: our sharpest conflicts and most glorious victories consist in resisting the devil, subduing the flesh, and striving against sin. In this war we must form no alliance, enter into no treaty, and give no quarter: and our once domineering sin, whether it be covetousness, pride, sensuality, or malice, must be marked as the object of our peculiar enmity and opposition; this, this especially must be crucified.—Activity, vigilance, courage, and wisdom, which this warfare requires, must be sought of God in earnest prayer; and thus we must "put on the whole armour of God;" to him we must look, on him we must depend, and to him give the glory, but without slacking our hands, or abating our diligence and self-denial. Nor must we be satisfied with obtaining some important victory, but must push our advantages, and pursue our scattered enemies, searching out the remains of sin as it rises up in our hearts; and thus proceed in aspiring at further conquests till we have set our feet upon the neck of every lust, and completed its entire destruction. In so doing we may confidently expect the assistance of the Lord: he will slay the sin that dwelleth in us, yet spare us, though the union seem to us inseparable: he will afford us light during our whole conflict, until

barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even unto Gibeon.

42 And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

43 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The other kings of Canaan confederating against Israel, 1—5. 2d. Joshua encouraged, instructed, and assisted of God, attacking, conquering, and utterly subduing them; and a commendation of his obedience, 6—15. 3d. A general account of his wars and conquests, 16—18. 4th. A note of the hardness of the Canaanites' hearts, with the reason of it, 19, 20. 5th. The destruction of the Anakims, 21, 22. 6th. The conclusion of the war, 23.

AND it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard *those things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2 And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

3 And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh.

4 And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that *is* upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5 And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them; for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly, and they fell upon them.

8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand

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until the warfare be accomplished: he will make one victory the forerunner and earnest of another; he will encourage us, and lead us on from strength to strength, until he hath made us more than conquerors. And though the war will be attended with labour and self-denial, yet there is not the least peril to the true soldiers who face their enemies; for not one of them shall perish. "The Lord God of "Israel fighteth for Israel;" and when he hath exercised our faith, patience, and subjection to his will, he will bring us all to the mansions above, enriched with the spoils of our conquered enemies, to join in songs of everlasting triumph and joyful praise. But let every Israelite remember, that he is a soldier belonging to a great army, whom he is to assist with all his power. Besides those particular advantages which he obtains for his own soul, the whole army are attempting to gain advantages against the common enemy, by the daily increase of the numbers of true believers. No single soldier can detachedly do any thing very considerable: but the combined efforts of the whole army, according to its several battalions, and every one manfully maintaining his post, may produce extensive and durable effects. And Oh that God would incline the hearts of all, who love Jesus Christ, and his cause of truth and righteousness, to lay aside their petty disputes and self-seeking, with their care about the interests of a party, that they might all concur in this glorious warfare; "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of "peace;" boldly professing their attachment to and dependence on the crucified Saviour; and striving to "let their "light shine before men, that they may see their good "works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven!"

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—3.] All the kings betwixt Jordan and the Mediterranean sea, from north to south, (ver. 2, 3.) had confederated against Israel: but it seems the events, recorded in the two preceding chapters, disconcerted and intimidated for a time, the kings who possessed the northern part of the land: and as Joshua did not proceed to attack them, they might have concluded that the Israelites, being satisfied with their present acquisitions, would push their conquests no further, if they were not molested. But their enmity and resentment would not permit them to be quiet, and when their courage was somewhat recovered, they renewed their confederacy against Israel. Thus the matter was so ordered of God, that in the whole war, except in the taking of Jericho and Ai, the Canaanites were the aggressors, and rushed forward upon their own destruction.

V. 4. *As the sand*, &c.] Josephus mentions three hundred thousand foot, with horses and chariots in proportion. We may with certainty infer the populousness and fertility of the promised land, from the expression in the text: as well as perceive the occasion which Joshua had of encouragement, for he had neither chariots, nor horsemen in his army; yet he had notwithstanding marched out to meet the enemy.

V. 6. *Thou shalt hough*, &c.] By cutting some sinews of their legs, the horses were rendered incapable of any service, except the drudgery of agriculture, and such other common employments. Joshua and the princes of Israel might

hand of Iſrael, who ſmote them, and chaſed them unto great Zidon, and unto Mizrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eaſtward; and they ſmote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joſhua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horſes, and burnt their chariots with fire.

10 And Joſhua at that time turned back and took Hazor, and ſmote the king thereof with the ſword: for Hazor before-time was the head of all thoſe kingdoms.

11 And they ſmote all the ſouls that *were* therein with the edge of the ſword, utterly deſtroying *them:* there was not any left to breathe; and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12 And all the cities of thoſe kings, and all the kings of them, did Joſhua take, and ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, *and* he utterly deſtroyed them, as Moſes the ſervant of the LORD commanded.

13 But *as for* the cities that ſtood ſtill in their ſtrength, Iſrael burned none of them, ſave Hazor only; *that* did Joſhua burn.

14 And all the ſpoil of theſe cities, and the cattle, the children of Iſrael took for a prey unto themſelves: but every man they ſmote with the edge of the ſword, until they had deſtroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15 As the LORD commanded Moſes his ſervant, ſo did Moſes command Joſhua, and ſo did Joſhua: he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moſes.

16 So Joſhua took all that land, the hills, and all the ſouth country, and all the land of Goſhen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Iſrael, and the valley of the ſame;

17 *Even* from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and ſmote them, and ſlew them.

18 Joſhua made war a long time with all thoſe kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Iſrael, ſave the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all *other* they took in battle.

20 For it was of the LORD to harden their

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might have thought this a good opportunity of furniſhing themſelves with horſes, and chariots for their future uſe: but Iſrael was not permitted to truſt in chariots, and horſes; (*Deut.* c. xvii. v. 16. *Pſalm* c. xx. v. 7:) they were therefore commanded to diſable all the horſes, and burn all the chariots; and they implicitly obeyed the command.

V. 9.] This formed a proper trial, and a remarkable proof of their obedience of faith; and expreſſed a contempt for, and defiance of the moſt formidable enemies, and preparations of war, having the Lord on their ſide; which was both becoming their character, and honourable to his name.

10 *Turned back*, &c.] Joſhua had carried the war to the moſt northern extremities of the land, even to the great, and ancient city of Zidon; he then turned back to deſtroy Hazor, and it's king, who had taken ſhelter in his capital, and who was at the head of the confederacy: and as that city was not intended to be the chief city of the Iſraelites, it was utterly deſtroyed.

V. 18. *A long time*, &c.] Caleb was forty years of age, when he went from Kadeſh-barnea to ſpy out the land, and he was eighty-five when the conqueſts were completed, (c. xiv. v. 7—10:) near thirty-nine years were expired before the Iſraelites paſſed over Jordan; this calculation therefore leaves between ſix or ſeven years for the term of Joſhua's wars. The whole country from north to ſouth was then ſubjected, and all the inhabitants deſtroyed, whom they had met with: the ſubſequent hiſtory ſhews, that they were not exterminated; but concealed themſelves by one means or other, till they were again able to make head againſt the Iſraelites.

V. 19, 20.] The Lord had forbidden the Iſraelites to make any league with the idolatrous inhabitants of the land: but the examples of Rahab, and of the Gibeonites ſhew, that individuals, or cities, who would renounce their idolatry, and heartily come into the intereſts of Iſrael might be ſpared: but the Canaanites in general were not in the leaſt diſpoſed ſo to do; and never ſo much as propoſed any terms of accommodation. This we are told was of the Lord: they had *previouſly* filled up the meaſure of their iniquity; and were *judicially* left to the blindneſs, pride, obſtinacy, and enmity of their own hearts, and to the power of ſatan, all reſtraints being entirely withdrawn: and the diſpenſations of God's providence were ſo appointed, as tended to harden them in oppoſition, and drive them to deſperation; in order that they might bring upon themſelves that vengeance, which they had juſtly merited, which the Lord had purpoſed to inflict, and of which he had conſtituted the Iſraelites his executioners by the commandment, which he had given to Moſes. This laſt reaſon is added, and repeatedly mentioned, to ſhew that Joſhua, and Iſrael did not act, in this buſineſs, out of cruelty, revenge, or avarice; but ſimply in obedience to God; *which alone* could induce real godly men, to make ſuch undiſtinguiſhing ſlaughter of their fellow creatures; and in doing which, doubtleſs, many of them did great violence to their own feelings and inclinations.

hearts, that they ſhould come againſt Iſrael in battle, that he might deſtroy them utterly, *and* that they might have no favour, but that he might deſtroy them; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

21 And at that time came Joſhua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains; from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Iſrael: Joſhua deſtroyed *them* utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Iſrael; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Aſhdod, there remained.

23 So Joſhua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, and Joſhua gave it for an inheritance unto Iſrael, according to their diviſions by their tribes. And the land reſted from war.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, a catalogue of the kingdoms ſubdued, 1ſt. By Moſes, eaſt of Jordan, v. 1—6. 2d. By Joſhua weſt of Jordan, v. 7—24.

V. 21. *The Anakims*, &c.] The Anakims, whoſe name had ſo terrified the unbelieving Iſraelites formerly, (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 33,) no ways diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this war, but were ſubdued, and deſtroyed with the other inhabitants.

V. 23. *The land reſted*, &c.] The cities, which had been taken were doubtleſs garriſoned, and ſome of the people diſperſed through the country to cultivate the lands; and preparation was making for the regular partition of it amongſt their tribes and families. New occupations, of which they had no experience, now called for their attention: but the Lord, who gave them the land, was able to teach them to cultivate it, and they would ſoon make proficiency in ſuch a work, under ſuch a teacher. (*Iſa.* c. 28. v. 24—29.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believer muſt never put off his armour, or expect durable peace, till he cloſe his eyes in death: nay as his ſtrength, experience, conſolations, and uſefulneſs are increaſed, he may expect more heavy trials, and more ſevere conflicts: but the Lord will not permit any of his enemies to aſſault him, until he hath prepared him for the battle. The ſtrongeſt faith will naturally be enfeebled, if we are left to ourſelves; and whenever we view difficulties or dangers with an eye of ſenſe, our hearts are overwhelmed with diſcouragement. But Jeſus ever liveth to intercede for his people, and their faith ſhall not fail, however ſatan may obtain permiſſion to aſſault them. By waiting upon the Lord they will renew their ſtrength; and their hopes will revive, and their hearts rejoice, even in the midſt of tribulation. Such perplexing trials will render their faith in, and dependance on God more ſimple, their prayers more fervent, and in the event their gratitude more lively: and without exception every croſs, and temptation, which the believer is enabled properly to endure, will enrich his ſoul with increaſing holineſs, and enlarge his everlaſting inheritance. The poſſeſſion of thoſe things, on which the carnal heart is prone to depend, is inimical to the life of faith, and the walk with God: therefore it is better to be without ſecular advantages, than to have our everlaſting intereſts endangered by them. True faith will produce obedience, and in proportion to the ſtrength of that faith: and they who proſper in the ways of God, take the precepts and directions from his word, as well as the promiſes, with equal ſimplicity of ſubmiſſion, and diligent obſervance. The Lord's ſervants have different employments allotted them, but every act of obedience will go counter to ſome natural inclination of our hearts; and therefore without a habit of ſelf-denial, and ſubjection of our will to the command of God, we cannot render unreſerved obedience. Nay, many times, in pleaſing God, we muſt expoſe ourſelves to the cenſure, and reproach of our fellow-creatures; and our beſt actions will by ill-judging men be ſuppoſed to reſult from the worſt of principles. But the teſtimony of our conſcience, and the approbation of our Judge will compenſate all conſequences. Would we approve our obedience upright, and the indubitable evidence of juſtifying faith, we muſt "leave nothing un-"done, which the Lord hath commanded to us:" for tho' omiſſions are neither ſo ſcandalous in the world, or in the church, as commiſſions, they are as certainly acts of diſobedience, and effects of a will unſubjected to God's authority. But however tedious, ſharp, and difficult the believer's warfare is, his patience in tribulation, may be encouraged by the joyfulneſs of hope; for he will ere long reſt in the Canaan above, from ſin, and from ſorrow. But how dreadful is the caſe of the obſtinate unbeliever, who is neither moved by promiſes, or warnings, judgments, or mercies, to ſeek peace with, and reconciliation to his offended God! When ſuch tranſgreſſors have provoked God to leave them to themſelves, they ſoon by their increaſing preſumption, and hardneſs of heart make way for the execution of his purpoſed vengeance, and for the diſplay of his righteouſneſs in their eternal deſtruction: nor will numbers, ſtrength, or carnal confidences avail any thing, when God ſhall ariſe to execute judgment upon his enemies. Thoſe trials, and perils, the proſpect of which deter many from a life of godlineſs, and often excite the apprehenſions of the true believer, are frequently in experience too inconſiderable for notice, and only excite ſhame and ſurpriſe, upon the recollection of the alarms, which they occaſioned. Let ſinners then take warning not to harden their own hearts, leſt God ſhould give them up to *judicial* hardneſs: let them lay down their arms of rebellion, and humbly ſue for peace, and they ſhall make peace, (*Iſaiah* c. xxvii. v. 5;) the effect of which ſhall be quietneſs and aſſurance for ever, (*Iſaiah* c. xxxii. v. 17.) And let none of us dread any thing in compariſon of the wrath of God, which is more terrible that we can poſſibly conceive.

NOW theſe *are* the kings of the land which the children of Iſrael ſmote, and poſſeſſed their land on the other ſide Jordan, toward the riſing of the ſun; from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the eaſt;

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heſhbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon:

3 And from the plain to the ſea of Chinneroth on the eaſt, and unto the ſea of the plain, *even* the ſalt-ſea on the eaſt, the way to Beth-jeſhimoth; and from the ſouth, under Aſhdoth-piſgah:

4 And the coaſt of Og king of Baſhan, *which was* of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Aſhtaroth and at Edrei.

5 And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Baſhan, unto the border of the Geſhurites, and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heſhbon;

6 Them did Moſes the ſervant of the LORD, and the children of Iſrael ſmite: and Moſes the ſervant of the LORD gave it *for* a poſſeſſion unto the Reubenites, and Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh.

7 And theſe *are* the kings of the country which Joſhua and the children of Iſrael ſmote on this ſide Jordan on the weſt, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount of Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joſhua gave unto the tribes of Iſrael *for* a poſſeſſion, according to their diviſions:

8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the ſprings, and in the wilderneſs, and in the ſouth country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebuſites.

9 The king of Jericho, one: the king of Ai, which *is* beſide Beth-el, one:

10 The king of Jeruſalem, one: the king of Hebron, one:

11 The king of Jarmuth, one: the king of Lachiſh, one:

12 The king of Eglon, one: the king of Gezer, one:

13 The king of Debir, one: the king of Geder, one:

14 The king of Hormah, one: the king of Arad, one:

15 The king of Libnah, one: the king of Adullam, one:

16 The king of Makkedah, one: the king of Beth-el, one:

17 The king of Tappuah, one: the king of Hepher, one:

18 The king of Aphek, one: the king of Laſharon, one:

19 The king of Madon, one: the king of Hazor, one:

20 The king of Shimron-meron, one: the king of Achſhaph, one:

21 The king of Taanach, one: the king of Megiddo, one:

22 The king of Kedeſh, one: the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one:

23 The king of Dor, in the coaſt of Dor, one: the king of the nations of Gilgal, one:

24 The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *Now theſe are*, &c.] This chapter connects the hiſtory of the conqueſt of Canaan, with that of the diviſion of it, which follows.

V. 14.] The Iſraelites utterly deſtroyed king Arad, and his cities, in the life-time of Moſes, and called the name of them Hormah; (*Numb.* c. xxi. v. 1—3.) Probably the king of Arad here mentioned is the ſame perſon. As his kingdom, was on the ſouthern border of Canaan, and not eaſt of Jordan, his country came into the poſſeſſion of Iſrael, under Joſhua; and therefore he is numbered in that diviſion of the kings, though ſubdued under Moſes. But Hormah is here mentioned as a diſtinct kingdom, from that of Arad; and probably there was another of that name; (*Numb.* c. xiv. v. 45.)

V. 24.] Every conſiderable town, or city was under the government of a king, who poſſeſſed the adjacent fields, and ruled with a deſpotic ſway, as is generally ſuppoſed: and though they doubtleſs waged frequent wars with each other, and gained advantages over each other: yet no one had acquired the ſovereignty of the whole. A ſingle view of a good map of ancient Canaan, will ſhew the reader all that learned men have conjectured or determined concerning the relative ſituation of the ſeveral places, which are mentioned in this, and the following chapters. And as that is the eaſieſt, and indeed the only method of convey-

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua directed of God to divide the land by lot, v. 1—7. 2d. A deſcription of the country, eaſt of Jordan, which had before been divided, v. 8—32. 3d. The Levites repeatedly excluded from any ſhare in the land, v. 14. 33.

NOW Joſhua was old *and* ſtricken in years; *and* the LORD ſaid unto him, Thou art old *and* ſtricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be poſſeſſed.

2 This *is* the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philiſtines, and all Geſhuri,

3 From Sihor, which *is* before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philiſtines; the Gazathites, and the Aſhdothites, the Eſhkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; alſo the Avites:

4 From the ſouth, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that *is* beſide the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:

5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon toward the ſun-riſing, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath;

6 All the inhabitants of the hill-country, from Lebanon unto Miſrephoth-maim, *and* all the Sidonians: them will I drive out from before the children of Iſrael; only divide thou it by lot unto the Iſraelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh,

8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moſes gave them, beyond Jordan eaſtward, *even* as Moſes the ſervant of the LORD gave them:

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ing a *clear idea* of the ſubject into the mind, the diſcuſſion of it, in this place, will be almoſt entirely waved.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enjoyment of preſent bleſſings ſhould revive the memory of, and gratitude for former mercies: and the benefit derived from the labours of the living ſervants of the Lord ſhould remind us to reſpect the memories of thoſe, who have heretofore ſerved God, and their generation. The national covenant mediated by Moſes, engaged many temporal advantages to a ſmall number of the Iſrael of God; but Jeſus alone brings the whole multitude of them to the promiſed reſt, and inheritance: and though his true people enjoy many bleſſings from him in this world; yet they do not enter upon the poſſeſſion of their complete felicity, till they paſs over the Jordan of death to the manſions above. The vengeance of a righteous God inflicted upon all theſe kings, and their numerous ſubjects for their wickedneſs, ſhould impreſs our minds with reverential awe of his majeſty and purity, and with dread and hatred of ſin: whilſt the fruitful land, which he beſtowed upon his choſen people, and *thus* prepared for their reception, ſhould inſpire our hearts with hope and confidence in his mercy, and with humble gratitude. In both, the final iſſue of all things is repreſented: when the wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, and the righteous into life eternal. Let us then flee from the wrath to come, and ſeek and pray to be numbered with his ſaints here, that we may be numbered with them in glory everlaſting.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *Thou art old*, &c.] Joſhua is ſuppoſed to have been about one hundred years of age at this time; and probably he found himſelf leſs capable of military ſervices, than he had formerly been: much of the land yet remained in the poſſeſſion of the ancient inhabitants, and perhaps he ſuppoſed, that the diviſion was not to take place, till the whole were actually ſubdued. But the Lord was pleaſed graciouſly to remove his anxiety, and to direct his conduct, by commanding him, whilſt he was able, and without further delay, to proceed to divide the land to thoſe tribes, which had not received their inheritance. The whole country, not excepting thoſe parts, which were yet in the hands of the ancient inhabitants, being ordered to be parted amongſt them, tended to remind them of the extent, and certainty of the divine promiſe, and to encourage them to expect, and ſeek the more complete performance of it: it was alſo a caution to them not to enter into any alliance with the remains of the devoted nations: and each tribe was thereby excited to levy war againſt thoſe Canaanites, who kept them out of poſſeſſion of their allotted inheritance.

V. 6. *By lot*, &c.] Though they had acquired the land by conqueſt, they were neitherto ſeize upon what they could, nor to have it all in common, nor to divide it by conſent, or by arbitration, but by a ſolemn appeal to the Lord himſelf, by the caſting of the lot. Canaan was the Lord's land, and Iſrael was the Lord's people, and the caſe was extraordinary: and this was the readieſt, and moſt effectual way of ſatisfying all parties, and preventing diſcontent, and inteſtine diſcord: and this method of diviſion would beſt typify the Lord's chooſing in his infinite wiſdom, and love, the temporal proviſion, and eternal inheritance of his true people. As every tribe had it's proportion, and ſituation determined by lot; ſo probably afterwards the ſubdiviſions to every family, and individual were regulated in the ſame manner: and thus their eſtates would deſcend to their poſterity, not ſo much as the inheritance of their fathers, as the inheritance, which the Lord had immediately allotted them.

9 From

9 From Aroer, that *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midſt of the river, and all the plain of Medebah unto Dibon;

10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heſhbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon;

11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geſhurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Baſhan unto Salcah:

12 All the kingdom of Og in Baſhan, which reigned in Aſhtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for theſe did Moſes ſmite, and caſt them out.

13 Nevertheleſs, the children of Iſrael expelled not the Geſhurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geſhurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Iſraelites until this day.

14 Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance: the ſacrifices of the LORD God of Iſrael made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he ſaid unto them.

15 And Moſes gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben *inheritance* according to their families:

16 And their coaſt was from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midſt of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;

17 Heſhbon, and all her cities that *are* in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon,

18 And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath,

19 And Kiriathaim, and Sibmah, and Zareth-ſhahar in the mount of the valley,

20 And Beth-peor, and Aſhdoth-piſgah, and Beth-jeſhimoth,

21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heſhbon, whom Moſes ſmote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, *which were* dukes of Sihon dwelling in the country.

22 Balaam alſo the ſon of Beor, the ſoothſayer, did the children of Iſrael ſlay with the ſword, among them that were ſlain by them.

23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border *thereof*. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

24 And Moſes gave *inheritance* unto the tribe of Gad, *even* unto the children of Gad, according to their families:

25 And their coaſt was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that *is* before Rabbah;

26 And from Heſhbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir;

27 And in the valley, Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the reſt of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heſhbon, Jordan and *his* border, *even* unto the edge of the ſea of Chinnereth, on the other ſide Jordan, eaſtward.

28 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad, after their families, the cities, and their villages.

29 And Moſes gave *inheritance* unto the half-tribe of Manaſſeh: and *this* was *the poſſeſſion* of the half-tribe of the children of Manaſſeh by their families.

30 And their coaſt was from Mahanaim, all Baſhan, all the kingdom of Og king of Baſhan, and all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Baſhan, threeſcore cities;

31 And half Gilead, and Aſhtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Baſhan, *were pertaining* unto the children of Machir the ſon of Manaſſeh, *even* to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.

32 Theſe *are the countries* which Moſes did diſtribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other ſide Jordan by Jericho eaſtward.

33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moſes gave

V. 21. *Dukes of Sihon*, &c.] Theſe princes of Midian are here called Dukes of Sihon, probably becauſe they had formerly been either his confederates, or tributaries. Theſe authenticated records concerning the boundaries of the inheritances belonging to each tribe, were intended to prevent litigations, or decide differences in future ages: and they would be very intelligible to thoſe, who lived upon the ſpot, and at the time; though they appear obſcure, and in ſome degree unintereſting to us.

V. 33. *Moſes gave not any*, &c.] As Moſes was himſelf not

not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Iſrael *was* their inheritance, as he ſaid unto them.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1ſt. An introduction to the diviſion of the country weſt of Jordan, v. 1—5. 2d. Caleb's demand of Hebron granted, 6—15.

AND theſe *are the countries* which the children of Iſrael inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the prieſt, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Iſrael, diſtributed for inheritance to them.

2 By lot *was* their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes, for the nine tribes, and *for* the half-tribe.

3 For Moſes had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half-tribe on the other ſide Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.

4 For the children of Joſeph were two tribes, Manaſſeh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, ſave cities to dwell *in*, with their ſuburbs for their cattle, and for their ſubſtance.

5 As the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo the children of Iſrael did, and they divided the land.

6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joſhua in Gilgal: and Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh the Kenezite ſaid unto him, Thou knoweſt the thing that the LORD ſaid unto

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of the tribe of Levi, he gave a ſpecial proof that he acted by divine authority, in thus overlooking his own family, and his own tribe: for though the Levites were well provided for, yet the continuance of that proviſion was ſo interwoven with Iſrael's adherence to their religion, that had they univerſally apoſtatized, the Levites would have been left deſtitute, whilſt all the other tribes would have had poſſeſſion of their eſtates: that is, without ſome immediate divine interpoſition. And had Moſes intended that they ſhould have any inheritance in Iſrael, he would probably have firſt provided for them; but he not only did not do this, but expreſsly appointed that they ſhould have none.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Old age gradually, and almoſt inſenſibly creeps upon mankind: and though the feeling of their infirmities continually reminds aged perſons of their time of life, yet they generally need to be put in remembrance of it by other methods, and excited to prepare for approaching diſſolution. "Whatever our hand findeth to do," reſpecting the glory of God, the ſalvation of our own ſouls, or the good of our fellow creatures, "we ſhould do it with all "our might:" and the expectation of death, as well as the calamities of life, ſhould warn us to redeem our time, and ſeize upon preſent opportunities of uſefulneſs. Our ſeaſon of labour, and of ſervice will ſoon expire, and we ſhall ſhortly be at reſt; we ought not therefore *now* to indulge ſloth, or ſhun to endure hardſhip. But if it be the Lord's will to lay us aſide through incapacitating infirmities, we ought to be ſubmiſſively willing to leave our deſigns unfiniſhed, to be completed by other hands. The Lord knoweth all our infirmities, and will not forſake his ſervants, when they are old, and infirm, and incapable of their work: yet when the heart is zealous, they who cannot perform one ſervice, will deviſe to be uſeful in ſome meaſure, in another, though not equally ſplendid, and honourable. But one ſucceſſion after another of godly perſons, and able miniſters die, and leave much of the earth in the poſſeſſion of the enemy of Chriſt, and of his people; though the promiſe aſſures us, that it will all in due time be wrenched out of the hands of that prince of darkneſs, and become entirely the kingdom of the Lord Jeſus. Indeed few, or none of us in this world live up to our privileges, and ſpiritual bleſſings, as delineated in the word of promiſe, being kept out of poſſeſſion by the enemies of our ſouls, eſpecially by "ſin that "dwelleth in us:" but this conſideration ſhould animate us to be active, and courageous, and to expect, and ſeek for ſtill greater, and richer acquiſitions of knowledge, holineſs, and heavenly conſolations. In the preſent ſtate of human nature, it is the Lord's will that there ſhould be diſtinctions of property, that every one may know, and be contented with his own. And whereſoever our habitation is placed; and in whatever honeſt way our portion is aſſigned us, we ſhould conſider them as allotted us of God, and acquieſce in, be thankful for, and make uſe of them as ſuch: and every prudent method ſhould be deviſed to prevent litigations about property, both at the preſent, and in future. The mercies of the Lord to his people, and his judgments upon his enemies, eſpecially thoſe, who have tempted others to commit wickedneſs, ought never to be forgotten, and ſhould frequently be mentioned by us; becauſe they are honourable to God, and profitable ſubjects for our meditation. The miniſters of the Lord ſhould ſtudy to ſhew, that they are peculiarly indifferent about worldly intereſts, (v. 33.) and the people ſhould take care, that they want nothing ſuitable to their ſtation; that they may neither be diſcouraged in, nor taken off from ſerving at the altar. But happy are they, who have the Lord God of Iſrael for their inheritance, how little ſoever of this world falls to their ſhare: his providence will ſupply their temporal neceſſities; his ordinances, and ſpiritual conſolations will feaſt their ſouls, until they arrive at that fulneſs of joy, and thoſe pleaſures, which are at his right hand for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 4. *For the*, &c.] The deſcendants of Joſeph forming two tribes, kept up the number of twelve, according to that of Jacob's ſons; and as Joſeph was allowed the double portion, Levi was otherwiſe provided for.

6—15.] Previous to the diviſion of the land by lot, Caleb came unto Joſhua at Gilgal, where probably the tabernacle, and ark of the Lord yet were, to prefer his claim of

Moſes

Moſes the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadeſh-barnea.

7 Forty years old *was* I when Moſes the ſervant of the LORD ſent me from Kadeſh-barnea to eſpy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart.

8 Nevertheleſs, my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

9 And Moſes ſware on that day, ſaying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden ſhall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever; becauſe thou haſt wholly followed the LORD my God.

10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he ſaid, Theſe forty and five years, even ſince the LORD ſpake this word unto Moſes, while *the children of* Iſrael wandered in the wilderneſs; and now, lo, I *am* this day fourſcore and five years old.

11 As yet I *am as* ſtrong this day as *I was* in the day that Moſes ſent me: as my ſtrength *was* then, even ſo *is* my ſtrength now, for war, both to go out and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD ſpake in that day; (for thou heardeſt in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fenced;) if ſo be the LORD *will be* with me, then I ſhall be able to drive them out, as the LORD ſaid.

13 And Joſhua bleſſed him, and gave unto Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day; becauſe that he wholly followed the LORD God of Iſrael.

15 And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba, *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had reſt from war.

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having Hebron, and the lands adjacent, aſſigned to him, without the caſting of lots reſpecting it: and with him came his brethren of the tribe of Judah, as ſupporting him therein. From this chapter it appears probable, that when the other ſpies terrified themſelves, and the people about the Anakims, who dwelt in Hebron, (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 22. 33,) Caleb in the confidence of faith propoſed to take that place for his inheritance, and to wait for it, till the Anakims were diſpoſſeſſed: and that by divine direction Moſes had engaged and ordered that it ſhould be ſo, at the time when the Lord declared that Joſhua and Caleb alone ſhould live to enter the promiſed land. The performance of this engagement he therefore laid claim to, and in ſupport thereof ſpake of it as well known to Joſhua, and the other parties concerned: he took occaſion to rejoice in the teſtimony, which the Lord had borne to his uprightneſs, that he had followed him wholly, and in the concurrent teſtimony of his conſcience, that he had given his report, "as it was in his "heart," with unbiaſſed ſincerity: and whilſt he intimated how the other ſpies diſcouraged the people, to their common deſtruction; he thankfully mentioned the goodneſs of God to him, in keeping him alive for forty-five years, whilſt all that generation were waſted in the wilderneſs, and amidſt all the perils of the wars in Canaan: and he obſerves that he was at eighty-five years of age as ſtrong, and as capable of war, as he had been at forty. All this became him, who was ſo eminent in character, and venerable in years, being more than twenty years older than any man in Iſrael, except Joſhua, and ſome of the Levites. It ſeems from the narration, that the Anakims had poſſeſſed themſelves of Hebron, after it was taken by Joſhua; and Caleb in conſequence undertook to drive them out: this he expreſſed his readineſs to attempt, not confiding in his ſtrength, or valour, or in the aſſiſtance of his brethren; but reſting the whole upon "the Lord's being with him;" and in intimation of his unworthineſs of ſuch a favour, though it doth not appear that he doubted the event, he expreſſed his confidence in this form: "If the Lord will be with "me, then I ſhall be able," &c. In conſequence Joſhua, and the princes conſented to his propoſal, and deemed it meet that he ſhould be thus diſtinguiſhed: Joſhua alſo "bleſſed him," that is prayed for his ſucceſs in his intended expedition, and for his comfort in his inheritance. Thus the matter was ſettled, and in the next chapter we read of his driving out the Anakims: and when the lots were caſt, Hebron fell within the lot of Judah, and he was not ſeparated from his brethren.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who deſire to proſper, and be comfortable, in their undertakings, and poſſeſſions, muſt acknowledge the Lord in all their ways, refer every matter to his deciſion, and regulate all their conduct by his commands. The preſervation, and contiuance of our lives, notwithſtanding internal decays, and diſeaſes, and external perils, and injuries, and whilſt ſuch numbers are dying around us, ought thankfully to be conſidered, and acknowledged as the Lord's doing: and when old perſons poſſeſs a meaſure of health, and vigour, at that time of life, which to others is labour and ſorrow, they are eſpecially called upon to be grateful. But old age, even when exempt from it's uſual attendants of infirmity and pain, is neither honourable, nor comfortable, except it be found in the way of righteouſneſs; for a long life ſpent in increaſing guilt, diffuſing wretchedneſs, and wickedneſs, and treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath, will in the event prove the moſt direful of all evils. Yet they who ſeek the Lord early, and follow him wholly, and ſtand immoveably firm, in times of general apoſ-

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. The boundaries of the inheritance of Judah, v. 1—12. 2d. Caleb obtaining poſſeſſion of Hebron; Othniel's marriage to Caleb's daughter, as a recompenſe for taking Debir: her requeſt granted by her father, v. 13—19. 3d. A liſt of the cities in the lot of Judah, v. 20—63.

THIS then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; *even* to the border of Edom; the wilderneſs of Zin ſouthward *was* the uttermoſt part of the ſouth coaſt.

2 And their ſouth border was from the ſhore of the ſalt ſea, from the bay that looketh ſouthward:

3 And it went out to the ſouth ſide to Maaleh-acrabbim, and paſſed along to Zin, and aſcended up on the ſouth ſide unto Kadeſh-barnea, and paſſed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compaſs to Karkaa:

4 *From thence* it paſſed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coaſt were at the ſea. This ſhall be your ſouth coaſt.

5 And the eaſt border *was* the ſalt-ſea, *even* unto the end of Jordan: and *their* border in the north quarter *was* from the bay of the ſea, at the uttermoſt part of Jordan.

6 And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and paſſed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the ſtone of Bohan the ſon of Reuben.

7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and ſo northward, looking toward Gilgal, that *is* before the going up to Adummim, which *is* on the ſouth ſide of the river: and the border paſſed toward the waters of En-ſhemeſh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel.

8 And the border went up by the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, unto the ſouth ſide of the Jebuſite; the ſame *is* Jeruſalem; and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom weſtward, which *is* at the end of the valley of the giants northward.

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which *is* Kirjath-jearim.

10 And the border compaſſed from Baalah weſtward unto mount Seir, and paſſed along

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tacy, and prevailing ungodlineſs, and in ſeaſons of ſharp temptation, and imminent danger; if afterwards favoured with long life, and enabled to ſpend it all in glorifying God, and doing good, are the moſt diſtinguiſhed, and honourable of the human ſpecies. They may look back upon their lives paſt, ſpent, by the grace of God, in ſome meaſure uſefully, and they may look forward to diſſolution, as ſpeedily approaching, with holy conſolation, (2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 6—8;) every part of their lives forms a divine atteſtation to their integrity, and evidences his ſpecial love, and their effectual calling. They have a teſtimony to their characters in the hearts of others, and may rejoice in the teſtimony of their own conſciences. Much have they to be thankful for: and it will *become them*, and *they* will know how with modeſty, and humility, to ſpeak of all, that the Lord hath done in them, for them, and by them, which will encourage others, and redound in many thankſgivings to God. And though the outward man decay, they will feel themſelves as ſtrong for their ſpiritual warfare as ever, and not fear by the help of God to drive out every enemy, which prevents their poſſeſſion of their promiſed inheritance. Such eminent believers ſometimes ſurvive envy, competition, calumny, and prejudice: their ſun, which hath long been obſcured by intervening clouds of ſlanderous reports, groundleſs jealouſies, and rancorous enmity, breaks through, and ſhines with bright ſerenity, before it ſets. The Lord bleſſes them; all around them perceive it, and call them bleſſed, and concur in ſhewing them diſtinguiſhing reſpect; and great uſefulneſs awaits their latter days, their cloſing ſcene, and dying teſtimony; whilſt they declare to all around them, that the Lord in performing his promiſes, hath exceeded their largeſt expectations. Let then young perſons be adviſed to ſeek the Lord early: let profeſſors be warned to follow the Lord wholly: let tried and tempted Chriſtians be encouraged to endure, and wait patiently: let thoſe, who meet with oppoſition, calumny, neglect, or ill ſucceſs, in their well-meant endeavours to do good, ſtand their ground ſtedfaſtly: let us all truſt in the Lord's faithful and merciful promiſes entirely; and aim ſo to walk with God, that if we are taken away more early in life, we may be found ready; and if ſpared till old age, may cloſe honourably, uſefully, and comfortably.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—12.] (*Numb.* c. xxxiv. v. 3—6.) After ſome general ſurvey of thoſe parts of the land, of which they were poſſeſſed, Joſhua proceeded to allot to Judah, Ephraim, and the half of Manaſſeh their ſituations and inheritances, before they left Gilgal: and afterwards, removing to Shiloh, a more extenſive, and accurate ſurvey was made, and the other tribes had their portions aſſigned them by lot alſo: (c. xviii. v. 1—10.) The inheritance which Judah after ſome deductions actually poſſeſſed, was large; for it was intended that this tribe ſhould have the precedency, and it was the moſt numerous of them all.

unto the ſide of mount Jearim, (which *is* Cheſalon,) on the north ſide, and went down to Beth-ſhemeſh, and paſſed on to Timnah:

11 And the border went out unto the ſide of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and paſſed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel: and the goings out of the border were at the ſea.

12 And the weſt border *was* to the great ſea, and the coaſt *thereof*. This *is* the coaſt of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

13 And unto Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joſhua, *even* the city of Arba, the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron.

14 And Caleb drove thence the three ſons of Anak, Sheſhai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-ſepher.

16 And Caleb ſaid, He that ſmiteth Kirjath-ſepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achſah my daughter to wife.

17 And Othniel the ſon of Kenez, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achſah his daughter to wife.

18 And it came to paſs, as ſhe came *unto him*, that ſhe moved him to aſk of her father a field: and ſhe lighted off *her* aſs; and Caleb ſaid unto her, What wouldeſt thou?

19 Who anſwered, Give me a bleſſing; for thou haſt given me a ſouth land, give me alſo ſprings of water. And he gave her the upper ſprings, and the nether ſprings.

20 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah, according to their families.

21 And the uttermoſt cities of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the coaſt of Edom ſouthward, were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

22 And Kinah, and Dimona, and Adadah,

23 And Kedeſh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, *and* Hezron, which *is* Hazor,

26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,

27 And Hazar-gaddah, and Heſhmon, and Beth-palet.

28 And Hazar-ſhual, and Beer-ſheba, and Bizjothjah,

29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,

30 And Eltolad, and Cheſil, and Hormah,

31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sanſannah,

32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain,

V. 13.] (c. xiv. v. 6—15.) Caleb, the Lord being with him, drove out the Anakims, but we do not find that he ſlew them, but probably they retired amongſt the Philiſtines, to the weſt of Hebron. This hiſtory ſeems to be introduced by way of anticipation: we ſhall meet with the ſame again; (*Judges*, c. i. v. 10—15.)

V. 15. *Debir—Kirjath-ſepher.*] Theſe names, ſignifying the one a word, or an oracle, the other the city of a book, have induced the opinion that this city, was a ſort of academy, or a repoſitory of the records, &c, amongſt the ancient inhabitants. It is not probable that writing, or books, in our ſenſe of the word, were very common: but learning of ſome ſort, and ſome method of recording remarkable events, or federal tranſactions, they doubtleſs had amongſt them. (*Acts*, c. vii. v. 22.)

V. 16, 17.] Caleb by his example, and by other methods was earneſt to excite the Iſraelites to obtain the poſſeſſion of their inheritance: but by this propoſal he moreover employed an expedient well calculated to ſecure the marriage of his daughter with a worthy man, who had previouſly entertained an affection for her, and knew the value of an alliance with a perſon ſo eminent for faith, and piety. Fathers amongſt the Jews, (and indeed amongſt all the ancients,) ſeem to have exerciſed a more abſolute authority, in diſpoſing of their daughters in marriage, than is cuſtomary amongſt us; who were in general habituated to acquieſce in the choice made for them. It ſeems the Canaanites had recovered the poſſeſſion of this city, after Joſhua had taken it; but it was in this manner again taken out of their hands.

V. 18, 19.] As Caleb had his inheritance aſſigned him, in a different way than the other Iſraelites; and as this caſe was ſingular, his daughter, being married to one of the ſame tribe, was allowed to inherit, though he had ſons. Having therefore given her a portion of land, which was much expoſed to the ſun, and not well ſupplied with water; in concert with Othniel, to whom ſhe firſt propoſed it, ſhe petitioned her father to give her another field, in which were ſprings of water. This ſhe called a bleſſing, both as a token of his paternal affection, and as conducing to her comfort in her ſituation. To this Caleb conſented, and "gave her the upper ſprings, and the nether ſprings;" both higher, and lower ground well watered. This hath been long accommodated to ſpiritual, and temporal bleſſings, as conferred by the grace, and providence of God upon believers. We ſhall meet with Othniel hereafter, as judge over Iſrael.

V. 32. *Twenty, and nine*, &c.] Thirty eight are here enumerated, but nine of them were afterwards allotted to Simeon; (c. xix. v. 1—9.)

and Rimmon; all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages.

33 *And* in the valley, Eſhtaol, and Zoreah, and Aſhnah,

34 And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam,

35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,

36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages.

37 Zenan, and Hadaſhah, and Migdal-gad,

38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,

39 Lachiſh, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

40 And Cabbon, and Lahmas, and Kithliſh,

41 And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; ſixteen cities with their villages.

42 Libnah, and Ether, and Aſhan,

43 And Jiphtah, and Aſhnah, and Nezib,

44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareſhah; nine cities with their villages.

45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages.

46 From Ekron even unto the ſea, all that *lay* near Aſhdod, with their villages:

47 Aſhdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great ſea, and the border *thereof*.

48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,

49 And Dannah, and Kirjath-ſannah, which *is* Debir,

50 And Anab, and Eſhtemoh, and Anim,

51 And Goſhen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages:

52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eſhean,

53 And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, Aphekah,

54 And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, (which *is* Hebron,) and Zior; nine cities with their villages:

55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,

56 And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,

57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages:

58 Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor,

59 And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon; ſix cities with their villages:

60 Kirjath-baal, (which *is* Kirjath-jearim,) and Rabbah; two cities with their villages:

61 In the wilderneſs, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah,

62 And Nibſhan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi; ſix cities with their villages.

63 As for the Jebuſites the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebuſites dwell with the children of Judah at Jeruſalem unto this day.

V. 36. *Fourteen*, &c.] Fifteen names are mentioned, but probably the two laſt names belonged to the ſame place. The chief uſe of theſe catalogues to us, conſiſts in helping us to underſtand ſome paſſages in the ſubſequent hiſtory. Several cities of the ſame name are enumerated, and different names are given in ſome inſtances to the ſame place: this occaſions ſome confuſion to us, but it would be plain enough to the Iſraelites: ſomewhat of the ſame kind takes place in the hiſtory, and geography of other countries. The lot of Judah contained one hundred and fourteen cities, beſides country villages, without including thoſe, which were afterwards given to the Simeonites. Even though the moſt of them were ſmall, yet the land muſt have been very populous.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord delighteth to honour and bleſs thoſe, who honour, and obey him; and to anſwer the expectations of thoſe, who confide in him: in which reſpects wiſe, and good parents will be followers of him, in their conduct towards their dutiful, and obedient children. It is a very valuable privilege to be cloſely united with thoſe families, which are diſtinguiſhed for their faith, and piety; and to contract marriage with thoſe, who have been trained up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord. When the character of parents, their education of their children, and the children's conſequent prudent, and pious conduct, combine; there is the faireſt proſpect that in the providence of God, they will be ſettled with their parents approbation, and to the mutual comfort, and advantage of all the parties concerned. Nature teaches us to grant the deſires of our children, in giving them temporal good things: *grace* will teach it's poſſeſſors to be ſtill more deſirous of, and earneſt in uſing means for, their being made partakers of ſpiritual bleſſings. When perſons in the married ſtate conſult each other's comfort, and advantage, and ſtudy to order all their concerns with mutual confidence, and agreement, domeſtic felicity will be their recompenſe. But if affection to a creature animates men to ſuch ſtrenuous efforts, and perilous adventures, what will the love of God our Saviour do, if it bear rule in our hearts? The deſire of enjoying his favour, of expreſſing our gratitude to him, and of promoting his glory, will prove a principle of ſelf-denying obedience, and patient ſuffering for his ſake, which will be "ſtronger than death;" (*Can.* c. viii. v. 6—8.) And if earthly parents, "being evil, know how to give good gifts

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1ſt. The inheritance of Joſeph's poſterity, weſt of Jordan, v. 1—4. *2d. The borders of the lot of Ephraim, v.* 5—9. *3d. Their neglect, in not driving out the Canaanites, v.* 10.

AND the lot of the children of Joſeph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the eaſt, to the wilderneſs that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el.

2 And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and paſſeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

3 And goeth down weſtward to the coaſt of Japhleti, unto the coaſt of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the ſea.

4 So the children of Joſeph, Manaſſeh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was *thus*; even the border of their inheritance on the eaſt ſide was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper;

6 And the border went out toward the ſea, to Michmethah on the north ſide, and the border went about eaſtward unto Taanath-ſhiloh, and paſſed by it on the eaſt to Janohah:

7 And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan.

8 The border went out from Tappuah weſtward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the ſea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families.

9 And the ſeparate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manaſſeh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and ſerve under tribute.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The families, and inheritance of the half tribe of Manaſſeh, v. 1—13. *2d. The petition of the ſons of Joſeph for an enlargement of their portion, rejected by Joſhua, with his counſel on the occaſion, v.* 14—18.

THERE was alſo a lot for the tribe of Manaſſeh, (for he *was* the firſt-born of Joſeph,) *to wit*, for Machir, the firſt-born of

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"to their children; how much more will our heavenly "Father give good things, to thoſe who aſk him!" Huſbands, and wives frequently concur in ſeeking acceſſions to their temporal riches; and under certain limitations, it may be well: but it is much better when they concur heartily in ſeeking, and praying for thoſe things, which are above, both for themſelves, each other, their children, and all around them. Indeed all the bleſſings of both the upper, and the nether ſprings belong to the children of God: as related to Chriſt they have the firſt, or the largeſt portion for his ſake, freely given them of the Father, as the lot of their inheritance. But they muſt exert themſelves vigorouſly, to ſubdue thoſe enemies, within, and without, which keep them out of poſſeſſion of thoſe comforts that the promiſe holds forth to them: and he is ever ready to aſſiſt all, who call upon him, to ſuccour them in this warfare. May the Lord then excite our diligence, and increaſe our faith, that we may be ſtrong in him, and in the power of his might: then inſtead of ſaying, "we "cannot drive them out," we ſhall exclaim, "I can do all "things, through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—8.] The inheritance of the two tribes of Ephraim, and Manaſſeh extended from Jordan to the Mediterranean ſea, acroſs the land; it lay north of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan, and ſouth of the other tribes. And the ſouthern part of this general allotment was aſſigned to Ephraim, the northern to Manaſſeh. But little more can be ſatisfactorily determined about it.

V. 9. *The ſeparate cities*, &c.] There were ſome cities, which fell within the lot of Manaſſeh, aſſigned to the Ephraimites, who more wanted them: the ſame ſeems to have been done in the caſe of ſome other tribes (ch. xvii. v. 9. 11;) according to a rule before given; (*Numb.* c. xxxiii. v. 54.)

V. 10. *Serve under tribute*, &c.] As there is no intimation that any of theſe Canaanites, renounced their idolatry, and came heartily into the intereſts of Iſrael; and as the Ephraimites were ſtrong enough to ſubject them, and compel them to pay tribute, (c. xvii. v. 13:) no excuſe can be made for their conduct, in making a league with, and ſparing thoſe whom God commanded them to deſtroy: but they conſulted their preſent eaſe, more than either their duty, the common good of Iſrael, or their own true, and durable intereſt.

For Practical Obſervations, ſee the cloſe of the enſuing chapter; as the two will be beſt conſidered in connexion.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *For he was*, &c.] Or "though "he was the firſt-born of Joſeph;" yet Ephraim inherited before him. (*Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 19, 20.) Machir is ſuppoſed to have been the only ſurviving ſon of Manaſſeh; and in ſome other inſtances, an only ſon is called the firſt-

Manaſſeh,

Manaſſeh, the father of Gilead: becauſe he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Baſhan.

2 There was alſo *a lot* for the reſt of the children of Manaſſeh by their families: for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Aſriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: theſe *were* the male children of Manaſſeh, the ſon of Joſeph, by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the ſon of Hepher, the ſon of Gilead, the ſon of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, had no ſons, but daughters; and theſe *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4 And they came near before Eleazar the prieſt, and before Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and before the princes, ſaying, The LORD commanded Moſes to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

5 And there fell ten portions to Manaſſeh, beſide the land of Gilead and Baſhan, which *were* on the other ſide Jordan;

6 Becauſe the daughters of Manaſſeh had an inheritance among his ſons: and the reſt of Manaſſeh's ſons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coaſt of Manaſſeh was from Aſher to Michmethah, that *lieth* before Shechem, and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.

8 *Now* Manaſſeh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah, on the border of Manaſſeh, *belonged* to the children of Ephraim:

9 And the coaſt deſcended unto the river Kanah, ſouthward of the river: theſe cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manaſſeh; the coaſt of Manaſſeh alſo *was* on the north ſide of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the ſea:

10 Southward *it was* Ephraim's, and northward *it was* Manaſſeh's, and the ſea is his border, and they met together in Aſher on the north, and in Iſſachar on the eaſt.

11 And Manaſſeh had in Iſſachar, and in Aſher, Beth-ſhean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, *even* three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manaſſeh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* thoſe cities, but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

13 Yet it came to paſs when the children of Iſrael were waxen ſtrong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

14 And the children of Joſeph ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying, Why haſt thou given me *but* one lot and one portion to inherit, ſeeing I *am* a great people, foraſmuch as the LORD hath bleſſed me hitherto?

15 And Joſhua anſwered them, if thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood-*country*, and cut down for thyſelf there, in the

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born. He was a man of war; probably he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf, whilſt in Egypt, in the aſſault, which the Philiſtines made upon the Ephraimites, and had defended his brethren; (*ſee* 1 *Chron.* c. vii. v. 21.) And as his poſterity were ſuppoſed to inherit his valour, ſome of them had their inheritance eaſt of Jordan, upon the frontiers, that they might defend them.

V. 5. *Ten portions*, &c.] It is not exactly known how many families of the Manaſſites inherited eaſt of Jordan; but in the caſe of Zelophehad's daughters, there were five ſubdiviſions, his ſingle portion being parted amongſt them, and ſome other ſubdiviſions made the whole number ten diſtinct lots.

14 *The children of Joſeph*, &c.] Joſhua was of the tribe of Ephraim, and his brethren might expect ſome favour on that account: their inheritance perhaps was leſs valuable, than that of Judah, and only ſufficient for one tribe, and they were two: much of their land was in the poſſeſſion of the natives; and they ſuppoſed, that if the Lord bleſſed, and increaſed them in future, as he had in times paſt, they ſhould be much ſtraitened for room. Theſe formed the grounds and encouragements of their petition. But there was a great deal blameable in them; they murmured againſt the portion, which the Lord had expreſsly aſſigned them by lot; they coveted what belonged to others, and neglected to get poſſeſſion of, and to cultivate their own land.

V. 15. *If thou be a great*, &c.] As a great people they were the better able to labour, and to fight; to clear and cultivate the unimproved wood-lands, and to diſpoſſeſs the Canaanites. And as the Lord had bleſſed them hitherto, they had the more encouragement to confide in his

land

land of the Perizzites, and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

16 And the children of Joſeph ſaid, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both they* who *are* of Bethſhean and her towns, and *they* who *are* of the valley of Jezreel.

17 And Joſhua ſpake unto the houſe of Joſeph, *even* to Ephraim, and to Manaſſeh, ſaying, Thou *art* a great people, and haſt great power; thou ſhalt not have one lot *only*:

18 But the mountain ſhall be thine; for it *is* a wood, and thou ſhalt cut it down: and the out-goings of it ſhall be thine; for thou ſhalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, *and* though they *be* ſtrong.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The congregation aſſembling, and the tabernacle ſet up at Shiloh, 1. *2d. Joſhua reproving the tribes who had not received their inheritance, cauſing a ſurvey to be made of the land, and dividing the remainder of it by lot,* 2—10. *3d. The boundaries of Benjamin's lot, and the cities contained in it,* 11—28.

AND the whole congregation of the children of Iſrael aſſembled together at Shiloh,

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aſſiſtance: nor would Joſhua ſhew partiality to his kindred, any more than Moſes.

V. 16. *Chariots of iron, &c.*] Theſe chariots were armed with long ſharp ſcythes from the axles, on each ſide, underneath, and in different directions. They were drawn by ſwift and ſtrong horſes, and driven by expert charioteers, who were generally accompanied by warriors that fought from the chariots. They made dreadful havock amongſt undiſciplined troops that were not accuſtomed to them; and were exceedingly formidable in the firſt onſet. But able commanders, by a ſkilful diſpoſition of their forces; and well-diſciplined troops by regular and expeditious movements, rendered their force and fury vain: and ſometimes by wounding and affrighting the horſes, they were driven back upon their own army with terrible confuſion and havock. Wherever therefore war became *a ſcience*, they fell into diſuſe as unwieldly and dangerous.

V. 17, 18.] Joſhua gently reproved the claimants for calling their portion *one lot*, and pointed out the improvement of which it was capable; and the extenſive tracts of land which might be cleared and reſcued from the Canaanites: and he aſſured them, that if they exerted their valour, force, and induſtry, according to their duty, in dependence on the Lord; the iron chariots, and the ſtrength of the Canaanites, would prove no bar to their ſucceſs and proſperity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS on the XVIth and XVIIth Chapters.

Though the diſtinctions of private property are from the Lord, and force or fraud muſt not be allowed to entrench upon them; yet brotherly love will not be very tenacious, but will readily communicate from its own abundance, to ſupply the wants of others, ſaying, "What is that between "me and thee?" The more we are endued with this ſpirit, the greater comfort we ſhall enjoy, and the more will God be glorified: and in every thing unity and affection among brethren is becoming, pleaſant, and mutually profitable. Alas! that even profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould be diſpoſed rather to murmur, envy, and covet, than to be content, thankful, and ready to diſtribute! But indeed we are naturally more prone to graſp at what belongs to others, than to manage our own to the beſt advantage; and many complain of poverty, and encroach upon the benevolence of others, becauſe they rebel againſt the ſentence of divine juſtice, "Thou ſhalt eat thy bread in the ſweat of thy "brow." In ſhort, men endeavour to excuſe themſelves from labour by any pretence: and nothing ſerves the purpoſe better, than having rich and powerful relations who are able to provide otherwiſe for them; though this is frequently done by a partial and unfaithful diſpoſal of thoſe emoluments, with which they are publicly entruſted. But there is more real kindneſs, in pointing to men out thoſe advantages which are within their reach, and in exciting and encouraging to a due improvement of them, than in granting any indulgence to ſloth and extravagance. True religion is far from giving the leaſt countenance to theſe evils: "We commanded," ſays the Apoſtle, "that if any man would not work, neither ſhould he "eat." (2 *Theſ.* iii. 7—12.) and many of our *cannots*, are only the language of ſluggiſhneſs, which magnifies every difficulty into an impoſſibility, and repreſents every danger as inevitable deſtruction. This is eſpecially the caſe in our ſpiritual work and warfare: but even our *profeſſed* relation to the Captain of the Lord's hoſt will not excuſe our ſloth and timidity. Our very complaints, that comforts are withheld and that our ſouls are joyleſs, frequently reſult from indolence and fear of the croſs: and when we are convinced that "without Chriſt we can do nothing," we are apt to ſit ſtill and attempt nothing. But "as many "as he loves, he rebukes and chaſtens;" and if we belong to him, he will ſtir us up to diligence, boldneſs, and perſeverance in well-doing; he will require us to break our league with every luſt, and renounce our worldly pleaſures and ſinful intereſts; to ſhake off our ſloth, and riſe ſuperior to our fears; to exert our beſt endeavours, and cry to him for help. Then our coaſt will be enlarged, (Note, 1 *Chron.* iv. 9, 10,) and our complainings ſilenced, or rather turned into joyful thankſgivings: and, if the Lord hath bleſſed us hitherto, this ſhould ſuffice to ſhame us out of our diſtruſt and repinings.—But we are again called to advert to Zelophehad's daughters; and thence to obſerve, that prudent foreſight, and believing application to and dependence on, the Lord, producing obedience to his commands, will enſure to us an intereſt in his promiſes, and a lot among his people in a future world. O Lord, teach us here to believe and obey, and give us an inheritance amongſt thy ſaints in glory everlaſting! Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *And, &c.*] The tribes of Judah,

Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there: and the land was subdued before them.

2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long *are* ye slack to go to possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?

4 Give out from among you three men for *each* tribe; and I will send them, and they shall rise and go through the land and describe it, according to the inheritance of them: and they shall come *again* to me.

5 And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north.

6 Ye shall therefore describe the land *into* seven parts, and bring *the description* hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.

7 But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.

8 And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go, and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh.

9 And the men went, and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came *again* to Joshua, to the host at Shiloh.

10 And

Ephraim, and Manasseh were at this time settled in their possessions; perhaps others were dispersed in some parts of the land, to cultivate it or gather in its fruits, where they could do it safely: it was therefore proper that the tabernacle and the ark should be removed to a more convenient situation; and Shiloh was selected for that purpose, doubtless by direction from the Lord, who might be consulted on the occasion by Urim and Thummim, (*Deut.* xii. 5. 11. 21.) This city was in the centre of the land, and as convenient as possible for all the tribes: and it was proper that the ark and the tabernacle, the glory and defence of the whole land, which were the visible symbols of Jehovah's presence, and stamped a relative holiness upon it, should be in the midst of it. Shiloh was in the lot of Ephraim, the tribe to which Joshua belonged, and it was convenient to all parties that the sanctuary should be near the residence of the chief governor.—The name of this city is the same with that by which Jacob predicted the Messiah; (Note, *Gen.* xlix. 10.) And it is supposed, that it was called Shiloh on this occasion, when selected for the resting place of the ark, and for the observance of all those institutions which typified our great Peace-maker, and our access to a reconciled God through his atonement and intercession. That part of the country being subdued, the Israelites could assemble without any interruption: and all personal cares and employments were laid aside; whilst with one consent they attended to this solemn and joyful religious duty: and probably such as still continued in their encampments, removed and pitched around the tabernacle, as they had before done, both in the wilderness and in Canaan.—In this place the ark and the sanctuary of God remained, till the former was taken by the Philistines in the time of Eli. Solomon's temple was begun four hundred and eighty years after Israel's departure from Egypt: and hence we may in general conclude, that the ark remained at Shiloh betwixt three and four hundred years.

V. 3—10.] The people, enriched with the plunder of the Canaanites, and living in plenty upon the labours of their conquered enemies, seem to have been more intent on present ease and indulgence, than upon obtaining possession of their intended inheritance; which could not be done without new dangers and fatigues. In the mean time the Canaanites were recovering strength and courage, much of their land remained unoccupied and uncultivated, and the Israelites were both impoverishing themselves and contracting bad habits. After a year or more had been consumed in this indolent manner, whilst they were but little acquainted with that part of the land, which was not yet divided among them, Joshua reproved their slackness, and directed them in what method to proceed. Some survey indeed must have been made previous to the allotment of portions to the aforementioned tribes; but it had not been sufficiently general and exact. Three persons, therefore, out of every tribe were chosen, that it might be done impartially; and perhaps they went in three companies for expedition, and made as exact an admeasurement and description of the country as they could: that the remaining land might be divided into seven parts, and the seven remaining tribes have their inheritances divided by lot; the situation being thus determined, and the quantity proportioned to their numbers. Whilst these surveyors were employed in this perilous work, they were, doubtless peculiarly emboldened and protected of God; the Canaanites, however enraged, were restrained from assaulting them; and they all returned in safety to Shiloh; and Joshua with religious solemnity cast lots for them before the Lord. After this survey it appeared that Judah's portion had been made disproportionably large: and therefore Simeon had his taken out from it; and that of Dan also seems to have fallen within the limits first described for Judah.

V. 14.

10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel, according to their divisions.

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families; and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

12 And their border on the north side was from Jordan: and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountain westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven.

13 And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, (which *is* Beth-el,) southward, and the border descended to Ataroth-addar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south-side of the nether Beth-horon.

14 And the border was drawn *thence*, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-baal, (which *is* Kirjath-jearim,) a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west-quarter.

15 And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah;

16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which *is* in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel.

17 And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which *is* over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben,

18 And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah;

19 And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah, northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan. This *was* the south coast.

20 And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz.

22 And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el,

23 And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

24 And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages:

25 Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

26 And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah,

27 And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah,

28 And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, (which *is* Jerusalem,) Gibeath, *and* Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

CHAP.

V. 14. *The corner of the sea*, &c.] As the inheritance of Benjamin did not extend to the Mediterranean sea; this expression must either mean that it terminated in an angle in that part nearest the sea; or some inland lake must be intended.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The duties of religion are our most important business, and must be attended to in the *first place*, even to the neglect of our worldly interests; if we would be happy in our own souls, and prosper in our undertakings: and the ordinances of God, when properly administered and attended on by all ranks and orders of men, form the glory and bulwark of any nation; for "them that honour God "he will honour, but they who despise him shall be lightly esteemed;" (1 *Sam.* ii. 30.) Under the gospel dispensation we have the true tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, not only in the midst of us, but every where present with us: and in our favoured land, we have the ordinances of God almost in every district; in which he is as truly, though not so sensibly, present, as between the cherubim over the mercy-seat. But what return do we render for such benefits? What improvement do we make of them? Alas! the courts of the Lord are generally unfrequented; his sabbaths are violated; his truths are opposed, despised, or abused; his commandments and authority are trampled upon; and few in comparison appear to value the pardon and everlasting life which are proposed to sinners in the gospel: and even they who profess

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. The lot of Simeon, 1—9. *2d. That of Zebulun,* 10—16. *3d. That of Iſſachar,* 17—23. *4th. That of Aſher,* 24—31. *5th. That of Naphtali,* 32—39. *6th. That of Dan,* 40—48. *7th. The inheritance of Joſhua,* 49—51.

AND the ſecond lot came forth to Simeon, *even* for the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

2 And they had in their inheritance, Beer-ſheba, and Sheba, and Moladah,

3 And Hazar-ſhual, and Balah, and Azem,

4 And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah,

5 And Ziklag, and Beth-markaboth, and Hazar-ſuſah,

6 And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen; thirteen cities and their villages:

7 Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Aſhan; four cities and their villages:

8 And all the villages that *were* round about theſe cities, to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the ſouth. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families.

9 Out of the portion of the children of Judah *was* the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them; therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

10 And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun, according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid.

11 And their border went up toward the ſea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbaſheth, and reached to the river that *is* before Jokneam;

12 And turned from Sarid eaſtward toward the ſun-riſing unto the border of Chiſloth-tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia,

13 And from thence paſſeth on along on the eaſt to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah;

14 And the border compaſſeth it on the north-ſide to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el;

15 And

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proſeſs to accept of them are often, through indolence, ſelf-indulgence, and fear of difficulties, rendered very irreſolute and ſlack, in "poſſeſſing the land, which the Lord God "hath given them." Indeed many of them do not ſeem to underſtand, becauſe they have not carefully ſurveyed, the extent of their privileges: and, when they are preſerved from terrors and diſtreſs of conſcience; when they keep up ſome tolerable hope of getting to heaven at laſt, and taſte ſome little comfort from time to time in the ordinances of God: they ſeem to think, that they poſſeſs all that can be expected in this world; and conſider heaven as an eſtate in reverſion, when they ſhall be ejected from their preſent too well beloved tenure of worldly comforts. Nor are they aware, that a cloſe walk and intimate communion with God, increaſing conformity to him, love of him and of one another, and a will united to his will form the very ſubſtance of heavenly felicity; and that much more of theſe bleſſed privileges may be enjoyed on earth, than we any of us have yet experienced.—But our Joſhua will rebuke this ſlackneſs: and he commands his miniſters of every name to declare to his people the truths, which reſpect their preſent conſolation and ſanctification, as well as their future inheritance, that they may be excited to preſs onward to the enjoyment of them. At his command we may boldly undertake any ſervice, and need fear no enemies. He aſſigns to each of us our preſent and our future portion, yet in this appointment he takes into the account, that diligence, vigilance, and faithfulneſs, which through his grace we are enabled to exerciſe: and as the induſtrious huſbandman, and intrepid warrior are *generally*, ſo the diligent, watchful, and courageous Chriſtian ſhall *always* be moſt proſperous. Having therefore food and raiment in this world, let us be therewith content: and may our wealth be laid up in the land of promiſe above, whither all the tribes of the redeemed will, in their ſucceſſion, ſhortly arrive, and receive their incorruptible inheritance.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 9. *Out of the portion,* &c.] The inheritance of the tribe of Judah was found to be more than was neceſſary, or than properly came to their ſhare; a portion therefore was allotted to the tribe of Simeon, taken from the ſouth-weſt part of it; and, it ſeems, that without murmuring they renounced their claim, at the inſtance of Joſhua, and thoſe who had been nominated to the office of dividing the land: (*Num.* xxxiv. 17—29.) The tribe of Dan had their inheritance on the north, and north-weſt of the lot of Judah, and adjoining to that part of the country of which the Philiſtines kept poſſeſſion. The other tribes here mentioned were ſituated north of Ephraim and Manaſſeh; and Aſher's lot was moſt northerly of them all, in the neighbourhood of Tyre and Zidon. There are in ſome places more names inſerted, than anſwer to the ſum total mentioned, and it is ſuppoſed, that ſome of them were names of country-villages; and that ſome cities, allotted to one tribe, were ſituated within the borders of another.

V. 47.

15 And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages.

16 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun, according to their families, these cities with their villages.

17 *And* the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar, according to their families.

18 And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem,

19 And Hapharaim, and Shihon, and Anaharath,

20 And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez,

21 And Remeth, and En-gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez;

22 And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh, and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages.

23 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

24 And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher, according to their families.

25 And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph,

26 And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihor-libnath,

27 And turneth toward the sun-rising to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthah-el toward the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand;

28 And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, *even* unto great Zidon;

29 And *then* the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre, and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea, from the coast to Achzib:

30 Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages.

31 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher, according to their families, these cities with their villages.

32 The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, *even* for the children of Naphtali according to their families.

33 And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan:

34 And *then* the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sun-rising.

35 And the fenced cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Cinnereth,

36 And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor,

37 And Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor,

38 And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages.

39 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

40 *And* the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.

41 And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh,

42 And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah,

43 And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron,

44 And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath,

45 And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon,

46 And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.

47 And the coast of the children of Dan went out *too little* for them; therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

48 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them:

50 Accord-

V. 47. *And*, &c.] (Notes, &c. *Judg.* xviii.)

V. 49, 50.] Joshua waited until all the tribes were set-

tled

50 According to the word of the LORD, they gave him the city which he asked, *even* Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

51 These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot, in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. Joshua reminded to appoint the cities of refuge, 1—6. 2d. Their appointment, names, and situation, 7—9.

THE LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

3 That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares, *and* unwittingly, may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not before-time.

6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, (which *is* Hebron) in the mountain of Judah.

8 And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward,

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tled, before he required any provision for himself. Probably the Lord had commanded the Israelites to give him an inheritance, at the time when he gave orders about Caleb: accordingly he desired to have Timnath-serah, which was neither a city of great note, nor situated in the best part of the land; but it lay in the lot of his own tribe, and not far from Shiloh where the ark of God was stationed. Thus he closed all his great and memorable services by an example of moderation, equity, piety, and industry in rebuilding the city assigned him, which does great honour to his character.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the true believer have entered into engagements which are likely to prove injurious to him, he will not retract, or disappoint those who confided in him: but if he have obtained an unintended and *improper* advantage in any contract, he will recede from it without murmuring, in compliance with the requisitions of equity and kindness. For "love seeketh not her own,—and does not behave un-"seemly;" and it will therefore induce those, in whom it richly dwells, to part with their own superfluity to supply what is lacking to their brethren.—They are most favoured in Providence, who are placed nearest to the sanctuary, and have most advantages for the salvation of their souls, and the fewest hindrances; though they possess not worldly affluence or distinctions: and, as far as we have the choice referred to us, we should always decide by this rule. But a sovereign God dispenses his favours as he pleases, and one man has his habitation assigned him in "the valley of vision," and another his, "in the very re-"gion of the shadow of death;" according to the good pleasure of his will, who deigns not to give any account of his matters to the presumptuous objector.—Disinterestedness, and an unassuming deportment, shed a peculiar lustre upon eminent characters; and they, who labour most to do good to others, will in proportion be indifferent about their own worldly interests, and willing to forego all things, rather than preclude themselves from the sweet pleasure of communicating felicity. An inheritance in the Canaan above they must and do covet; but it will be soon enough to enter upon it when they have done all the service to their brethren, of which they are capable; nor can any thing more effectually assure them of their title to it, than laying themselves out properly to bring others to desire, to seek, and to obtain possession of it.—But Jesus hath far outdone all others in this, and in every other respect. "Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that "we through his poverty might be made rich!" He would not enter upon his inheritance, till by his obedience unto death he had secured eternal happiness for all his people! nor will he account his own glory completed, until every ransomed sinner is put in possession of his heavenly rest.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 2—6.] As soon as the Israelites were settled in their promised inheritance, they were reminded to separate the cities of refuge; the use and typical meaning of which have already been explained: (*Notes, &c. Numb.* xxxv.)—When the manslayer arrived at the city of refuge, he underwent a kind of trial, before he was taken under the protection of the elders of the city, who, it seems, were allowed to exclude or apprehend him, if he were

eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1st, The Levites requiring their cities, 1, 2. 2d. The cities assigned, and divided to them; their navies and situations, 3—42. 3d. The performance of the Lord's promises noticed, 43—45.

THEN came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazer the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

2 And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

3 And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs.

4 And

were adjudged a wilful murderer. And afterwards he must stand in judgment before the congregation, or its magistrates: and if he were then condemned he was to be delivered to the avenger of blood: (9.) This was calculated to prevent such abuses, as were generally made of *sanctuaries* among other nations, in which the most atrocious criminals were screened from justice.

V. 7—9.] All these cities were assigned to the priests and Levites: and they were situated on each side of Jordan in different parts of the land, and in the most convenient places. (*Deut.* iv. 40—43.) As this institution was mainly intended for a type of the sinner's refuge from the sword of avenging justice, the signification of the names of these cities has generally been noticed, with reference to the person, character, offices, and love of Christ. *Kedesh* signifies *holy*, and Jesus is the Holy One of God, and is "made sanctification to us:" *Shechem, a shoulder;* and the "government is upon his shoulder;" *Hebron, fellowship*, and through him sinners are admitted to have fellowship with God; *Bezer, a strong hold*, and such is he to those who trust in him; *Ramoth, exaltations*, and he is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour: and *Golan, exultation* or *joy*, and in him all believers are justified and glory, or rejoice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have great cause for thankfulness, that we have been preserved from the murderer's sword, nay if we have not ourselves committed that horrid crime: for the violent passions of the human heart, instigated by satan's temptations, naturally terminate in murder, if God withdraw his restraining hand. We ought likewise to be thankful that we have not been destroyed *unwittingly* by others, and if we have been preserved from the great calamity of being the unwilling cause of another's death.—We may also learn from the subject before us, to watch over all our passions with the strictest attention, and pray to be preserved from such sins and calamities; and to be made ready, if without warning we should be called out of time into eternity. No sanctuary should protect, no favour should on any account be shewn, the wilful murderer: and no protection, assistance, or kindness can be too great to be extended to the unfortunate manslayer.—But it will not be a needless, or a vain, repetition, if we are again reminded to bless God for that appointed and consecrated refuge, which he hath prepared in his Son, for our guilty perishing souls. They, who flee to him, will be secured from all condemnation, yea though they have committed the most atrocious crimes, not excepting even the worst of murders: nor will any protection, instruction, sanctification, fellowship with God, or holy joy be with-held from them. His power and presence will be their strong tower against all their enemies; nor will the exalted Saviour fail, (in consequence of his own death,) to restore every one of them to his forfeited inheritance; nay to *exalt* them to share his glory, in the presence of his Father and their Father, of his God and their God. To him let sinners flee, before the sword of vengence overtake them; for he is ever near, and will not cast out any who come to him: in him let believers abide, hope, and rejoice: him may we all love, imitate, and obey!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1, 2.] The Levites had waited till all the other tribes had received their inheritance and were about to separate, before they preferred their claim to Joshua. They were excluded from receiving any portion in the division of the land, and had therefore as good a right to the tithes, first fruits, with other perquisites, and forty-eight cities with their suburbs for their habitation; as the other Israelites had to their lands. It hath already been observed, that these cities were intended for the benefit of the land; the Levites being thus situated in every part of it, to instruct and edify the people by their doctrine and example: (*Note Numb.* xxxv. 2—8.) It may be further remarked that they were dispersed as watchmen, to restrain idolatry, and to provide for the punishment of those who were notoriously guilty of it; and as it was their *interest*, as well as *duty*, to retain the people in the worship of Jehovah alone, this was a very suitable expedient. Numbers probably lived in these cities, besides the priests and Levites, as their tenants, for the advantage of their instructions, or to carry on trades among them; and the subsequent history countenances this supposition. Thus in

every

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, *which were* of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

5 And the rest of the children of Kohath *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

6 And the children of Gershon *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

7 The children of Merari, by their families, *had* out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

8 And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are *here* mentioned by name,

10 Which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: (for their's was the first lot.)

11 And they gave them the city of Arba, the father of Anak, (which *city is* Hebron,) in the hill-*country* of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

12 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, for his possession.

13 Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest, Hebron with her suburbs *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs,

14 And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs,

15 And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs,

16 And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, *and* Beth-shemesh with her suburbs: nine cities out of those two tribes.

17 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs,

18 Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs: four cities.

19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs.

20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.

21 For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs:

22 And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs: four cities.

23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs,

24 Aijalon with her suburbs, Gath-rimmon with her suburbs: four cities.

25 And out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Taanach with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs: two cities.

26 All the cities *were* ten, with their suburbs, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

27 And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the *other* half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge

every way this tribe was plentifully provided for, as long as the people adhered to the worship, and respected the commandments of God.

V. 4. *Thirteen cities.*] The priests at this time could be but very few in number, how much soever the family of Aaron had increased since his appointment to the priesthood: yet all these cities were allotted to them, as a patrimony, and in the divine foreknowledge of their future multitudes; for we have reason to think that no family in Israel increased so much in proportion, after their departure out of Egypt, as that of Aaron. These cities were assigned them *by lot*, not so much in the neighbourhood of Shiloh, where the tabernacle and the ark then were; as in that of Jerusalem, whither they were removed four hundred years afterwards.

V. 11, 12.] Either the *city* of Hebron was not included with the *territory* in the grant made to Caleb: or he remitted from his right, that he might set a good example to his brethren, and induce them the more cheerfully to contribute to the maintenance of religion.

V. 43—45.]

fuge for the ſlayer; and Beeſhterah with her ſuburbs: two cities.

28 And out of the tribe of Iſſachar, Kiſhon with her ſuburbs, Dabareh with her ſuburbs,

29 Jarmuth with her ſuburbs, En-gannim with her ſuburbs: four cities.

30 And out of the tribe of Aſher, Miſhal with her ſuburbs, Abdon with her ſuburbs,

31 Helkath with her ſuburbs, and Rehob with her ſuburbs: four cities.

32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedeſh in Galilee with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer; and Hammoth-dor with her ſuburbs, and Kartan with her ſuburbs: three cities.

33 All the cities of the Gerſhonites, according to their families, *were* thirteen cities with their ſuburbs.

34 And unto the families of the children of Merari, the reſt of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her ſuburbs, and Kartah with her ſuburbs,

35 Dimnah with her ſuburbs, Nahalal with her ſuburbs: four cities.

36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her ſuburbs, and Jahazah with her ſuburbs,

37 Kedemoth with her ſuburbs, and Mephaath with her ſuburbs: four cities.

38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer; and Mahanaim with her ſuburbs,

39 Heſhbon with her ſuburbs, Jazer with her ſuburbs: four cities in all.

40 So all the cities for the children of Merari, by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot, twelve cities.

41 All the cities of the Levites, within the poſſeſſion of the children of Iſrael, *were* forty and eight cities with their ſuburbs.

42 Theſe cities were every one with their ſuburbs round about them: thus *were* all theſe cities.

43 And the LORD gave unto Iſrael all the land which he ſware to give unto their fathers: and they poſſeſſed it, and dwelt therein.

44 And the LORD gave them reſt round about, according to all that he ſware unto their fathers: and there ſtood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all theſr enemies into their hand.

45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had ſpoken unto the houſe of Iſrael; all came to paſs.

V. 43—45.] This was a very proper concluſion to the hiſtory of the conqueſt and diviſion of the land; and a becoming acknowledgment of the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes. For wiſe and gracious reaſons, ſome of the Canaanites were permitted to continue amongſt them; (*Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 29, 30;) but at that time they gave them no moleſtation; nor would they ever have made head againſt them, but ſpeedily have been exterminated, had not the people provoked the Lord, to employ them for their chaſtiſement, as we ſhall read in the ſubſequent hiſtory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The maintenance of the miniſtry is the appointment, and command of God, and not a matter of mere choice, or diſcretion; and they, "who labour in the word and doc-"trine" have as good a right to it, as other men have to their eſtates; and on ſome occaſions muſt be allowed without cenſure to aſſert their claim, againſt ſuch as would defraud them: but it ſhould always be with reluctancy, and backwardneſs; and as a matter of neceſſity, not of choice, or a diſpoſition to diſpute about temporal intereſts: and and with a willingneſs to refer themſelves to the arbitration of any impartial perſons. And in ordinary caſes it ſavours of a more excellent ſpirit, and more accords to the New Teſtament examples, when miniſters chooſe rather to "ſuffer all things," than to take any ſteps, which may impede the ſucceſs of their miniſtry. Yet their willingneſs to give up their right forms no excuſe for, but is an aggravation of their ſin, who deprive them of it. This proviſion for miniſters ought, if poſſible, to be ſo regulated, as to coincide with the grand end of their miniſtry, and to occaſion them as few avocations, temptations, or diſcouragements, as may be: and to afford them every advantage, of acceſs to the people; that they may exhort, reprove, and inſtruct them without falling under their contempt, or dreading their diſpleaſure. And it is well when miniſters, and their people conſider themſelves as *watchers* over each other: when the miniſter, from a recollection, that the people exactly obſerve his deportment, "walks the more "circumſpectly," "avoiding all appearance of evil;" leſt they ſhould be prejudiced or miſled; and leſt his exhortations and inſtructions ſhould loſe their efficacy: and when the people conſider that the miniſters are appointed to watch for their ſouls, as they, "that muſt give account;" and ſtudy ſo to receive their admonitions, and profit by their inſtructions, "that they may do it with joy, and not "wi h grief:" (*Heb.* c. xiii. v. 17.) But how dreadful is it when they encourage, and embolden one another

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua diſmiſſing the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manaſſites, with commendation, counſel, prayers, and great booty, v. 1—10. *2d. Their erecting an altar on the banks of Jordan: the other tribes taking umbrage, preparing for war, and ſending ambaſſadors to them, v.* 9—20. *3d. The anſwer of the Reubenites, &c. to the ſatisfaction of their brethren; and the name of their altar, v.* 21—34.

THEN Joſhua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh,

2 And ſaid unto them, Ye have kept all that Moſes the ſervant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3 Ye have not left your brethren theſe many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4 And now the LORD your God hath given reſt unto your brethren, as he promiſed them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, *and* unto the land of your poſſeſſion, which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD gave you on the other ſide Jordan.

5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment, and the law, which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to ſerve him with all your heart, and with all your ſoul.

6 So Joſhua bleſſed them, and ſent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7 Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manaſſeh Moſes had given *poſſeſſion* in Baſhan; but unto the *other* half thereof gave Joſhua among their brethren on this ſide Jordan weſt-

in wickedneſs! A particular Providence is concerned in the ſituation of miniſters; who ſhould conſider their poſt, and work, as allotted to them of God, and chearfully continue therein, though they ſeem to have more diſcouragements, and inconveniences, than the reſt of their brethren; and not to remove, till they are ſatisfied in their own minds, after much ſerious conſideration, and prayer, that the Lord orders them to another ſtation, and work. Happy is that land where the true and faithful miniſters of God are to be met with in every diſtrict! The people will never be impoveriſhed by their maintenance; ſo long as they diligently apply themſelves to diſperſe the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and to diffuſe the light of divine truth: to oppoſe the ſpread of immorality, and to promote the practice of univerſal holineſs; and by their doctrine, influence, example, and prayers, to render all within their ſphere more wiſe, holy, and happy. Perſons of eminence ſhould take the lead in every good work, that their examples may excite others: always remembering, that pre-eminence in real uſefulneſs, is the moſt valuable of all diſtinctions.—In due ſeaſon all the promiſes of God will be accompliſhed to his true people: and their believing hope, and patient waiting, and ſelf-denying obedience, will iſſue in joyful ſongs of triumph, and thankful celebrations of his faithfulneſs, love, and power: then will it be univerſally acknowledged that there hath not failed ought of any good thing, which the Lord had ſpoken of, nay that he hath exceeded their largeſt expectations, made them more than conquerors, and brought them to their deſired, and delightſome reſt, and inheritance. May none of us at that ſeaſon be found amongſt his enemies, who ſhall be deſtroyed for ever! Let no true believer deſpond, becauſe of delays, tribulations, and temptations; for God hath confirmed his promiſe, and covenant with an oath, that we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us; let us then beg of him to enable us to confide in him entirely, and obey him unreſervedly, and to wait for him patiently: "for we have need of patience, that after we have done the "will of God, we might receive the promiſe." (*Heb.* c. x. v. 36.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 3. *Theſe many days*, &c.] The Reubenites, &c, had at leaſt been abſent from home ſeven years: except as any of them had viſited their families, or been exchanged for others of their brethren. During this long war they had been very obedient to Joſhua, and did not attempt to return, till it was ended, the land divided, and their brethren ſettled; and then Joſhua honourably diſmiſſed them.

V. 5. *With all your heart*, &c.] The ſacred penman doth not record any of Joſhua's inſtructions to them, about their civil government, military diſcipline, or cultivation of their lands. Nothing was deemed worthy of inſertion in the ſacred volume, but thoſe things, which pertained to the maintenance of true godlineſs amongſt them. Perfect obedience to, or juſtification by the holy law of God, as a covenant of works, were no more practicable in the days of Joſhua, than at preſent: yet he exhorts them to that perfection, which the ſpiritual law of God requires. For the ſtandard of our obedience cannot be too complete, (*Matt.* c. v. ver. 48,) our aim cannot be too high: we ſhall be ſure to fall ſhort enough, whatever ſtandard we propoſe unto ourſelves; and the conſciouſneſs of ſuch imperfections will ſubſerve the purpoſes of humiliation; and the feeling of our own inſufficiency, will dictate, and render fervent our prayers for forgiveneſs, and aſſiſtance: whereas, if we previouſly aim at a low meaſure of holineſs, we ſhall become ſatisfied with preſent attainments, and ſupine and formal in our frame of ſpirit, if not buoyed up with ſelf-ſufficiency, and ſpiritual pride.

V. 6, 7. *Joſhua bleſſed them*, &c.] That is, he expreſſed

ward.

ward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them;

8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

10 And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that *are* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

11 And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.

12 And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest;

14 And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel, and each one *was* an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

15 And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass *is* this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

17 *Is* the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, (although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,)

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his affectionate good-will to them, by fervent prayers for them, and pronouncing a solemn blessing on them.

V. 8. *Divide*, &c.] (*Numb.* c. xxxi. v. 27. 1 *Sam.* c. xxx. v. 24. *Psalm* lxviii. v. 12.)

V. 10. *Built there*, &c.] The Reubenites, &c, were suspected of intending to sacrifice on this altar: it was therefore doubtless in their own inheritance, east of Jordan; they were not ambitiously disposed to record their own exploits, but to erect a monument that they were the worshippers of Jehovah, and interested in the tabernacle worship, the altar, and all the sacrifices, that were offered upon it. This they devised to ascertain by erecting an altar, exactly in the form of that at Shiloh, but vastly larger. Yet they had done better, if they had previously consulted the Lord, or explained their intention to Joshua, Eleazar, and their brethren. But as they approved themselves upright, we do not find their indiscretion censured.

V. 12.] The command of God was express, that no sacrifices were to be offered, except at the door of the tabernacle: the building of another altar seemed to imply an intention of offering sacrifices, and this might prove one step towards apostacy, and idolatry: which was to be punished with death, (*Deut.* c. xiii,) without respect to affinity, or to numbers. Though these were their brethren, and had been very serviceable to them: yet their regard to the honour of God, and the interests of religion swallowed up, (as it were) all inferior regards; and in this commendable zeal, all the tribes of Israel were prepared to unite their arms against them. But they were too precipitate; and swayed too much by report, and convened at Shiloh with too angry a spirit, as if impatient to be engaged in so horrid a warfare. It was too harsh, even if they had sacrificed upon their altar, to condemn it as idolatry: and even in that case, they were commanded to make diligent search, and to go upon nothing less than an absolute certainty, in waging war against them; (*Deut.* c. xiii. v. 14, 15.) But when they were assembled at Shiloh, probably the wisdom, and authority of Joshua, Eleazar, &c, tempered their zeal, and they previously sent ambassadors to discover the truth, and to recover them to their duty by other methods, that they might not be necessitated to go to war with them. Phinehas was placed at the head of this embassy, whose zeal had before been so signalized: and having obtained an audience of the heads of the Reubenites, &c, they delivered their embassy in very plain terms, and such as appear somewhat rigorous; but which the more aptly denote, how much they were engaged in the cause of God, and of religion.

V. 17. *From which we are not*, &c.] This may be understood of the disgrace of the crime, which still lay upon them; or of the tokens of divine displeasure, which were yet felt amongst them, notwithstanding the plague: or rather, that there were many individuals in the congregation, who had never truly repented of, or recovered them-

18 But

18 But that ye muſt turn away this day from following the LORD? And it will be, *ſeeing* ye rebel to-day againſt the LORD, that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Iſrael.

19 Notwithſtanding, if the land of your poſſeſſion *be* unclean, *then* paſs ye over unto the land of the poſſeſſion of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take poſſeſſion among us: but rebel not againſt the LORD, nor rebel againſt us, in building you an altar beſide the altar, of the LORD our God.

20 Did not Achan the ſon of Zerah commit a treſpaſs in the accurſed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Iſrael? and that man periſhed not alone in his iniquity.

21 Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh anſwered, and ſaid unto the heads of the thouſands of Iſrael,

22 The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Iſrael he ſhall know, if *it be* in rebellion, or if in tranſgreſſion againſt the LORD, (ſave us not this day,)

23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the LORD himſelf require *it:*

24 And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, ſaying, in time to come your children might ſpeak unto our children, ſaying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Iſrael?

25 For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you: ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no part in the LORD: ſo ſhall your children make our children ceaſe from fearing the LORD.

26 Therefore we ſaid, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for ſacrifice:

ſelves from that wickedneſs, but who yet lay under the guilt of it, and were diſpoſed to renew their provocation, ſhould an occaſion be afforded them. In ſhort, the fire had been ſmothered up, but not totally extinguiſhed; and it was therefore very dangerous to admit of any practice, which might occaſion it's breaking forth again, leſt ſtill wider devaſtation ſhould enſue.

V. 18, 19.] The propoſal here made, diſplayed in a very affecting manner their piety, diſintereſtedneſs, and brotherly love. They had indeed reproved their brethren ſharply, and were prepared to wage war againſt them, with their whole force, if the glory of God, and the intereſts of religion required it: but yet they loved them with ſo generous an affection, that they would rather divide their eſtates with them, than be under the painful neceſſity of ſo doing: if therefore the Reubenites, &c, deemed their inheritance polluted, becauſe they had no altar amongſt them, on which to offer *expiatory* ſacrifices; and had by that conſideration been induced to tranſgreſs the commandment of God, and adopt a meaſure, which might be productive of ſuch fatal conſequences; they would chearfully relinquiſh a part of their inheritances in Canaan, to make room for them, on that ſide Jordan, rather than leave them to perſiſt in ſo ruinous an expedient.

V. 20. *Periſhed not alone*, &c.] The thirty-ſix men, who were ſlain before Ai, and all the family of Achan had periſhed with him in his iniquity: and wrath would have come upon the whole congregation, had he not been puniſhed. If then one man's ſin wrought ſo much indignation, what would be the conſequences of the apoſtacy of two tribes and an half!

V. 22. *The Lord God*, &c.] This anſwer of the Reubenites, &c, is well worthy of admiration. They took the ſuſpicions, reproofs, and even harſhneſs of their brethren in good part, and did not object to the authority of the elders at Shiloh, or adviſe them to look to themſelves, and their own concerns, or in any manner retort upon them: but with the utmoſt ſolemnity, and meekneſs proceeded to explain their intention, and to give their brethren all the ſatisfaction in their power. Their appeal to the Lord, againſt whom they were ſuppoſed to have rebelled, was made with peculiar propriety, and with great reverence. The titles, by which they addreſſed him, "the Lord God "of Gods, the Lord God of Gods, &c," formed a very proper confeſſion of their faith in, as well as an act of worſhip of him, as the Eternal, Almighty God, who was exalted far above, and ſovereign Lord of all creatures however great; and even of thoſe, which other nations worſhipped as their gods: they proteſted, knew, and Iſrael ſhould know, that they were not guilty of thoſe things, with which they were charged: and indeed if they could be proved guilty, they acknowledged, that they did not deſerve, and therefore did not aſk, to be ſpared.

V. 24, 25.] They further declared that their motives in erecting this altar were directly contrary to thoſe, which had been imputed to them. For they were greatly afraid, leſt in proceſs of time the other tribes ſhould not acknowledge them as brethren, nor admit them to the ordinances of the Lord; leſt their poſterity, by reaſon of their diſtance, or ſlackneſs in attendance upon the ſolemn feaſts, ſhould at length be refuſed admiſſion amongſt them, and thus be tempted, and gradually decline to idolatry: and that no other motive had induced them to build the altar in queſtion, after the faſhion of that at Shiloh, but that it might remain to ſucceeding generations a memorial that they were Iſraelites, that they were intereſted in all the ſacrifices offered upon the altar of the Lord, and had a right to join with them in all their public religious ſolemnities.

27 But

27 But *that* it *may be* a witneſs between us and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the ſervice of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our ſacrifices, and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not ſay to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD.

28 Therefore ſaid we, that it ſhall be, when they ſhould *ſo* ſay to us, or to our generations in time to come, that we may ſay *again*, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt-offerings, nor for ſacrifices, but it *is* a witneſs between us and you.

29 God forbid that we ſhould rebel againſt the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for ſacrifices, beſide the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle.

30 And when Phinehas the prieſt, and the princes of the congregation, and heads of the thouſands of Iſrael, which *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the children of Manaſſeh ſpake, it pleaſed them.

31 And Phinehas, the ſon of Eleazer, the prieſt, ſaid unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manaſſeh, This day I perceive that the LORD *is* among us, becauſe ye have not committed this treſpaſs againſt the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Iſrael out of the hand of the LORD.

32 And Phinehas, the ſon of Eleazar, the prieſt, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Iſrael, and brought them word again.

33 And the thing pleaſed the children of Iſrael; and the children of Iſrael bleſſed God, and did not intend to go up againſt them in battle, to deſtroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed:* for it *ſhall be* a witneſs between us that the LORD *is* God.

CHAP.

V. 30. *And*, &c.] This anſwer entirely removed all the ſuſpicions from the minds of the ambaſſadors; and they were both pleaſed that their brethren were not guilty, and that they were ſo piouſly diſpoſed.

V. 31. *Now ye have*, &c.] Had the Reubenites, &c, been guilty; or had they anſwered with contempt, and ſo provoked the other tribes to war againſt them, they would have occaſioned ſin and puniſhment to the congregation: but their pious, frank, meek, and wiſe anſwer had brought the buſineſs to an amicable concluſion, and prevented all fatal conſequences.

V. 34. *Called the altar*, &c.] As the word *Ed*, in the firſt clauſe, is not in the original; ſo the meaning ſeems to be, that the perſons concerned inſcribed theſe words on the altar, *It is a witneſs, that the Lord is God.* They, as well as their brethren weſt of Jordan, acknowledged and worſhipped Jehovah, as the only true God: and by this meaſure they endeavoured to prevent any future abuſe or miſconſtruction of this altar; that it might neither occaſion ſuperſtition, nor be a ſtumbling-block to their brethren. Thus was this affair happily terminated; and though human infirmity is diſcoverable on both ſides; yet the pious reader will thence collect the moſt pleaſing ideas of the general and zealous regard, which was then paid to the worſhip and ordinances of God; and be confirmed in the ſentiment, that this was indeed the very beſt of all the generations of Iſrael.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The work of God and the welfare of his people are entitled to a preference above our moſt important perſonal intereſts, our ſweeteſt domeſtic comforts, and our moſt endeared relative affections: and every engagement, into which we have entered, ought to be diſcharged with ſtrict punctuality, without the leaſt appearance of prevarication, and, if it can be done, to the complete ſatisfaction of all parties. Nay, the believer ſhould be ſo well pleaſed with ſerving the cauſe of the church of Chriſt on earth, as to be willing to tarry yet longer in this world of warfare, labour, and trouble, and to wait patiently till the Lord Jeſus honourably diſmiſſes him: (*Phil.* i. 20—24.) But if we are numbered among his ſoldiers, we ſhould obey his orders with chearfulneſs and exactneſs; that we may at laſt receive his commendation. Of this honour we all ought to be ambitious, and of this alone.—He will bleſs thoſe whom he approves, and recompenſe them in proportion to the ſelf-denial, hardſhip, and affliction which they have endured for his ſake: nay the power, number, and malice of our enemies, and the long continuance of our warfare, will eventually increaſe the riches of our gracious reward; which all our brethren will ſhare with us, by rejoicing in our fulneſs of joy, as we ſhall alſo rejoice in their's.—Commendation ought not to be withheld from thoſe who have behaved well; gratitude to the inſtruments conſiſts very well with ſuperior gratitude to the Author of all our mercies; our beſt counſels and fervent prayers are a debt, which we owe *eſpecially* to thoſe who have been uſeful to us; and the comfort of others ſhould be regarded equally with our own. The true intereſt of individuals and of nations does not conſiſt in wealth, or greatneſs, but in loving, cleaving to, and obeying the Lord: and we ſhould aim *very high* in this great concern, or elſe our attainments will be very low.—When urgent affairs have called or detained

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st, Joshua convening the elders of Israel, 1–2. *2d. Reminding them of the Lord's kindness and promises, exhorting them to adhere to his worship, and cautioning them against connections with the Canaanites,* 3—12. *3d. Warning them of the consequences of disobedience,* 13—16.

AND it came to pass, a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old *and* stricken in age.

2 And Joshua called for all Israel, *and* for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old *and* stricken in age:

3 And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God *is* he that hath fought for you.

4 Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

5 And

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tained men from their families for a season, they should return home as soon as they are able, that they may instruct and rule over them in the fear of God; and share all their acquisitions with them, in liberal hospitality, and not in personal indulgence or excess.—We should highly value the ordinances of God ourselves, and desire to perpetuate them to our posterity; that they may inherit the blessings of the communion of the saints, and be preserved from all temptations to ungodliness or false religion: and when our situation in life, or the choice which we have inadvertently made for them or for ourselves, exposes them to peculiar danger, we should devise every prudent means of preventing the fatal effects.—Though we ought carefully to take heed that our good be not evil spoken of; yet they, who are truly zealous for the honour of God, and active in promoting true godliness, must not think it strange, if their honest and proper measures be suspected or censured, even by such of their brethren, as are no less zealous than they, but from concurring circumstances are led to express their zeal in another way. We ought however constantly to watch against a disposition to rash judgment, uncandid surmises, and harsh reproofs; and to cultivate and pray for the contrary spirit: but should it be our trial to be rebuked with severity, and loaded with calumny; we should be thankful for the testimony of our consciences to our integrity, and for confidence in appealing to our heart-searching Judge, that we are misrepresented, or misunderstood. And if the Lord knoweth our innocence, Israel shall know it in due time; for when our consciences are clear, he will at length clear our character, which we may therefore safely commit to his keeping; (*Psalm* xxxvii. 6.) While we are exposed to this trial, we ought cautiously to avoid all recriminations, to speak with mildness and seriousness, and be ready to offer such explanations of our conduct and intentions, as may obviate misconstructions and satisfy the minds of our pious and candid brethren, and to alter whatever has been wrong, or appears suspicious.—But charity hopeth all things, and rejoiceth not in iniquity: and they, who "abound in this grace also," will be glad to find themselves mistaken, in the unfavourable opinion of their brethren which they reluctantly entertained; and will bless God for evidences of their faith and piety.—When our boldness in opposing, and our sharpness in reproving or punishing sin, are the effects of genuine zeal and love; they will be attended with a disposition to renounce our own interests, that sin may be prevented. God may be glorified, and temptations removed out of the way of our brethren: and we have learned a good lesson, when we are brought to dread sin worse than poverty or suffering.—In all our appeals to the Lord, we ought to have our minds possessed with a solemn reverential awe of his majesty, authority, heart-searching knowledge, and perfections; and never to call him to witness about any thing trivial or doubtful, or in a light and rash manner.—Happy will it be when all professed Christians shall learn, in their differences, to copy the example of Israel recorded in this chapter; and to unite zeal and steady adherance to the cause of truth, with candour, meekness, a readiness to understand each other, to explain, and to be satisfied with the sufficient explanations and concessions of their brethren. Oh how long shall acrimony, misrepresentation, uncandid construction, false testimony, severity, ridicule and contempt, opprobious epithets, and an obstinate pertinacity in defending every title of a system, and carrying every sentiment to the utmost extreme! how long, I say, shall these things disgrace the very name of religious controversy, and confirm the prejudices of thousands against those precious truths, which have often been contended for in so odious a manner! When will Christians remember, "that by this shall all men know the disciples of Christ, "when they have love one for another?" and when will they recollect that "if they bite and devour one another, they "are likely to be consumed one of another?" For the world, and the god of this world, have no higher gratification, than to see the different denominations of professing Christians exposing, reviling, and ridiculing each other! May the Lord increase the number of those, who "endea-"vour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of "peace:" and may increasing grace and consolation be with all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity, by whatever name they are distinguished. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1. *A long time*, &c.] Perhaps about ten years.

V. 2. *For all Israel, and for*, &c.] That is *for all Israel, even for their elders*, &c. When Joshua had given the following charge to the elders, and to the rulers of thousands, and of hundreds; they would be enabled to communicate the substance of it in their several districts, that all Israel might hear. Probably this was done at Shiloh, on one of the solemn feasts.

V. 6.

5 And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left:

7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them.

8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

9 For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

12 Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you;

13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

14 And behold this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof.

15 Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the

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V. 6. *Be ye*, &c.] Whilst the Israelites adhered strictly to the whole law of Moses, they would be kept entirely distinct from the Canaanites and the surrounding nations, and would in consequence be exposed to their hatred and opposition. They were likewise required to carry on unceasing war against the inhabitants of the land, avowedly aiming at their entire extirpation; which would expose them to their unabating and most rancorous enmity. Great courage would therefore be required in order to a determinate obedience in such circumstances: and Joshua probably had observed that the people were more intent upon the quiet enjoyment of their present possessions, than upon boldly improving their advantages, as the Lord by Moses had commanded them.

V. 7. *Cause to swear*, &c.] The habitual mention of the names of idols, had it been allowed, would gradually have introduced the custom of swearing by them in common discourse: and this would have abated the abhorrence of idolatry in the minds of the people, and have prepared the way for more direct acts of idolatrous worship. The paintings, statutes, and poems, exquisitely finished by human ingenuity, but replete with references to the detestable heathen mythology, with which our land is stored, tend exceedingly to habituate the mind to reflect upon the Roman and Grecian idolatry without horror, nay with a kind of pleasure; to banish the language of piety from men's lips, and thus to subserve the cause of scepticism, infidelity, and ungodliness: (*Note*, *Exod.* xxiii. 13.).

V. 10. *One man*, &c.] If the Israelites continued to cleave unto the Lord, he engaged to fight for them as he had hitherto done. After they were dispersed in their several possessions, they might not be able to bring such large armies into the field, as when encamped in one body: but that ought not to discourage them; for one Israelite should chase a thousand Canaanites, so long as they cleaved unto the Lord; for he himself "would fight for them," (*Lev.* xxvi. 8. *Deut.* xxxii. 30. 1 *Sam.* xiv. 6.)

V. 13. *Snares and traps*, &c.] The Canaanites would first be snares and traps to the people, and then scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes. If they entered into any amicable correspondence with the conquered nations, their women would allure them to form connections or marriages with them; and by their blandishments would entice them to join in idolatrous worship. Thus they would be taken in satan's snares and traps: for indeed the Canaanites must always be enemies to the Israelites under every mask; and they would always watch their opportunity of avenging themselves upon them. When therefore the Israelites had provoked the Lord to withdraw his protection, the Canaanites would be the ready instruments of their chastisement; but if that did not bring them to repentance, their cruelties would torment them as a thorn in the eye would do, and even drive them out of the promised land. The subsequent history abundantly illustrates the propriety of these expressions.

V. 14—16.] The Israelites were deeply affected with the wonderful performance of the promises which God had made to their fathers; and Joshua, (as he supposed with his parting breath,) declared to them, that the threatenings would be accomplished with equal certainty and exactness whenever they transgressed their covenant by apostacy and idolatry.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Through the deceitfulness of the human heart, we are never more in danger of forgetting the Lord, than when he hath most favoured us with temporal prosperity!—They who

the LORD your God promiſed you: ſo ſhall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have deſtroyed you from off this good land, which the LORD your God hath given unto you.

16 When ye have tranſgreſſed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and ſerved other gods, and bowed yourſelves to them; then ſhall the anger of the LORD be kindled againſt you, and ye ſhall periſh quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua again convening the elders of Iſrael, reminding them of the Lord's goodneſs, engaging them to chooſe his ſervice by ſolemn covenant, and recording, and forming a memorial of, this tranſaction, 1—28. *2d. His death and burial; Iſrael's adherence to the ſervice of the Lord; the burial of Joſeph's bones; and the death and burial of Eleazar,* 29—33.

AND Joſhua gathered all the tribes of Iſrael to Shechem, and called for the elders of Iſrael, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers: and they preſented themſelves before God.

2 And Joſhua ſaid unto all the people, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they ſerved other gods.

3 And I took your father Abraham from the other ſide of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his ſeed, and gave him Iſaac.

4 And

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who poſſeſs influence, on account of age, authority, reputation for wiſdom and piety, or eminent ſervices, ſhould employ it all, with unwearied perſeverance, to their lateſt breath, in promoting the practice of true godlineſs.—Gratitude, duty, intereſt, and regard to our own beſt happineſs, with united energy, require us to adhere to our profeſſion, and walk conſiſtently with it: yet we all need to be frequently reminded, exhorted, and warned of theſe things.—So long as men cleave to the Lord, though they have abated ſomewhat of their fervour and diligence, there is a good ground of hope that admonitions will have a proper effect; and the diſeaſes of the ſoul, like thoſe of the body, ſhould be reſiſted at firſt before they have gathered ſtrength.—We cannot too frequently be called upon to meditate on the Lord's paſt and preſent kindneſs to us; and to reflect upon his gracious promiſes, and aweful threatenings: and we ſhould treaſure up our experience of his exact performance of his word, to ſtrengthen our expectation of the accompliſhment of the whole in due ſeaſon; for hope and fear, and every paſſion of the ſoul, ought to be engaged to reſtrain men from ſin, and to keep them cloſe to their duty.—It is true wiſdom to diſcern and ſhun the occaſions of ſin and inlets to it; and none are more dangerous than ungodly companions. Acquaintance, friendſhip, and marriage, with perſons of no religion, or of falſe religion, have generally been found progreſſive ſteps towards the mere profeſſor's apoſtaſy, and the believer's loſs of all his life, comfort, and uſefulneſs. They, who at firſt are tempters, will eventually prove the ſcourges of thoſe who have liſtened to their ſeductions: and either bitter diſtreſs in this world, or utter deſtruction in the world to come, are the unavoidable effects of yielding to ſuch temptations. This all ought "to know for a certainty," that they "may take good "heed unto themſelves" and not allow the love of any creature to draw them off from the love of God and obedience to his laws.—Our minds ought to be filled with an abhorrence of every kind of ungodlineſs, equal to that which the moſt conſcientious perſons feel of murder or adultery; for the guilt of neglecting and deſpiſing the glorious God our Creator, is far greater, than that of injuring our fellow-creatures; yet this is vaſtly different from the ſentiments and conduct of fallen man. But our inward foes are the moſt dangerous; and we muſt oppoſe and mortify them with unrelenting ſeverity, or they will occaſion us much miſery: ſo that this warfare will require great courage and reſolution. For if we reſolutely adhere to the word of God as our rule, neither turning aſide to the right hand nor to the left; we ſhall certainly be hated, deſpiſed, and reproached, if not worſe treated, by them whoſe pride is affronted, or whoſe conſcience is made uneaſy through our holy ſingularity and faithful reproofs. We need not however fear them; "for the Lord our God "will fight for us, as he hath promiſed," and nothing will by any means hurt us: and though uſeful inſtruments and valued friends are removing from us; yet the Lord ever liveth to protect, uphold, guide, comfort, and bleſs us. But ſinners have indeed cauſe to tremble at his indignation: for he will as certainly execute his threatenings, as perform his promiſes; and hypocrites or apoſtates will be as ſeverely treated, as open infidels and profligates. Let us then watch and pray againſt temptation; let us truſt in the faithfulneſs, love, and power of God; let us plead his promiſes and cleave to his commandments; and then we ſhall be happy in life, and death, and for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *To Shechem*, &c.] Shechem was nearer to Timnath-ſerah, than Shiloh was; and Joſhua, being old and infirm, convened the tribes and elders of Iſrael to that place. Finding his life ſtill prolonged, he was deſirous of once more enforcing upon the Iſraelites the great things of their religion, in the moſt ſolemn and affecting manner poſſible.

V. 2. *The other ſide of the flood*, &c.] That is, *of the river Euphrates*. It is ſaid that "*they* ſerved other gods;" hence it is evident that Abraham, (as well as Terah and Nahor,) had been guilty of idolatry, before he was called to the knowledge of God, when he was above ſeventy years of age.

V. 7.

4 And I gave unto Iſaac Jacob and Eſau: and I gave unto Eſau mount Seir, to poſſeſs it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

5 I ſent Moſes alſo and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them; and afterward I brought you out.

6 And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the ſea; and the Egyptians purſued after your fathers with chariots and horſemen unto the Red ſea.

7 And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkneſs between you and the Egyptians, and brought the ſea upon them, and covered them: and your eyes have ſeen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderneſs a long ſeaſon.

8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other ſide Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might poſſeſs their land; and I deſtroyed them from before you.

9 Then Balak the ſon of Zippor, king of Moab, aroſe and warred againſt Iſrael, and ſent and called Balaam the ſon of Beor to curſe you:

10 But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he bleſſed you ſtill: ſo I delivered you out of his hand.

11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought againſt you, the Amorites, and the Perrizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgaſhites, the Hivites, and the Jebuzites; and I delivered them into your hand.

12 And I ſent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy ſword, nor with thy bow.

13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat.

14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and ſerve him in ſincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, and in Egypt; and ſerve ye the LORD.

15 And if it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the LORD, chooſe ye this day whom ye will ſerve; whether the gods which your fathers ſerved that *were* on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whoſe land

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V. 7. *Your eyes*, &c.] Many of thoſe, who in their youth had witneſſed theſe miracles, were doubtleſs ſtill living; and the elders, judges, and officers, whom Joſhua addreſſed, might conſiſt chiefly of this number.

V. 9. *Warred*, &c.] Balak intended to make war on Iſrael, and called Balaam previouſly to curſe them, but he was not permitted to execute his purpoſes.

V. 12 *I ſent the hornet*, &c.] (*Note*, *Exod.* xxiii. 28.) Probably theſe inſects ſo infeſted the armies of Sihon and Og, when preparing for the battle, as to throw them into confuſion, and thus to give the Iſraelites an eaſy victory; which demanded the greater gratitude from them, as not having been obtained by their ſword or bow.

V. 14. *Put away the gods*, &c.] It ſeems that the Iſralites ſtill retained ſome reliques of the idolatry of their fathers, which from time to time they were tempted to worſhip. In this very place Jacob had "put away the ſtrange "gods" which were in his family, and buried them under an oak; (*Gen.* xxxv. 2—4.) But his deſcendents had formed other images of the ſame ſuppoſed deities, and had not, during the life of Moſes or ſince his death, been induced to deſtroy them all, as Joſhua well knew; and therefore he inſiſted upon their putting them all away together, if they meant to be ſincere and entire in the ſervice of Jehovah.

V. 15. *Chooſe ye*, &c.] The Lord has an unalienable right to the worſhip and obedience of all rational creatures, which cannot be withheld without contracting the deepeſt guilt, and incurring the ſevereſt vengeance. But it is eſſential to this worſhip and obedience that it be performed with a willing mind; for LOVE is the very ſubſtance of it, and the only *genuine principle* whence it can ſpring. A reluctant unwilling worſhip and obedience can riſe no higher than hypocriſy. "The Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him, who "worſhip him in ſpirit, and truth." But "the carnal mind "is enmity againſt God," and therefore incapable of ſuch a ſpiritual worſhip. Hence the neceſſity of being born again; and when we diſcover this neceſſity, and the nature of this gracious change, we are induced to ſeek for it in the uſe of *appointed means*; and thus we become *conſciouſly* and *experimentally* partakers of it, and are numbered among thoſe who worſhip God in ſincerity and genuine love. But in the viſible church of profeſſed worſhippers, numbers have always reſted in the mere form, in an *unpleaſant taſk* which they have impoſed upon themſelves, to avoid worſe conſequences, or in a ſelfiſh hope of reward: and a great part of the uſefulneſs of preaching conſiſts, in diſcovering the difference betwixt the *form* and the *power* of godlineſs; and in ſtirring up the minds of men from reſting in the former to ſeek after the latter. The method, which Joſhua adopted, in treating with the Iſraelites, was admirably calculated and evidently intended to produce this effect. Many of them were already ſpiritual worſhippers:

land ye dwell: but as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the LORD.

16 And the people anſwered and ſaid, God forbid that we ſhould forſake the LORD, to ſerve other gods;

17 For the LORD our God he *it is* that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage, and which did thoſe great ſigns in our ſight, and preſerved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we paſſed:

18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: *therefore*, will we alſo ſerve the LORD: for he *is* our God.

19 And Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Ye cannot ſerve the LORD; for he *is* an holy God: he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your tranſgreſſions, nor your ſins.

20 If ye forſake the LORD, and ſerve ſtrange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and conſume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people ſaid unto Joſhua, Nay; but we will ſerve the LORD.

22 And Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Ye *are* witneſſes againſt yourſelves that ye have choſen you the LORD, to ſerve him. And they ſaid, *We are* witneſſes.

23 Now therefore put away, *(ſaid he,)* the ſtrange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Iſrael.

24 And the people ſaid unto Joſhua, The LORD our God will we ſerve, and his voice will we obey.

25 So Joſhua made a covenant with the people that day, and ſet them a ſtatute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26 And Joſhua wrote theſe words in the book

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pers: a far greater number might be favourably diſpoſed toward the worſhip and ſervice of the Lord; but through procraſtination and worldly avocations not yet truly engaged in it: and many doubtleſs had a ſecret diſlike to ſpiritual religion, who would have been aſhamed to confeſs it, and would be ſhocked at the propoſal of renouncing the worſhip of God, and openly profeſſing themſelves idolaters. —Of this ſtate of their minds Joſhua aimed to take advantage, and to lead them by this propoſal to conſider their ways; to reflect upon their own inconſiſtency, formality, or procraſtination; and to engage deliberately, ſeriouſly, and with full purpoſe of heart, in the Lord's ſervice. Thus he likewiſe intimated that apoſtacy from God to the worſhip of idols would not be more deſtructive to them, than hypocriſy, a ſecret averſion from true godlineſs, and a lifeleſs profeſſion: that, if the ſervice of God were worth any thing, it was worth every thing: that for his part, he had made up his mind, and had deliberately and decidedly choſen to ſerve the Lord fully and heartily: that he was determined to uſe all his authority and influence with his family to prevail with them to follow his example: and that he greatly deſired to perſuade the people to make the ſame choice, and to act in the ſame manner.

V. 19. *Ye cannot*, &c.] Joſhua did not ſpeak this with any intention of deterring the people from God's ſervice; but to put them upon their guard againſt objections which are commonly made to a life of ſtrict godlineſs, as if intolerably difficult, or even impracticable; and to lead them to count their coſt, and to conſider before-hand what they engaged to do.—With great addreſs, and deep acquaintance with the human heart, he ſeized the advantage which their preſent impreſſions afforded him, to render them abiding and effectual. When a certain degree of inclination towards any object hath once gained poſſeſſion of the heart, it is always increaſed by the proſpect of difficulties in the way; provided they appear ſurmountable by contrivance, exertion, and perſeverance.—This management of Joſhua had a direct tendency to lead the Iſraelites to reflect upon the character and perfections of Jehovah, and upon the nature of his ſervice; to advert to their own unholineſs and inſufficiency, and to that encouragement and aſſiſtance which the word of God propoſed to them; to induce them to eſteem the acceptable ſerving of God, as a prize worth their utmoſt labour and earneſtneſs; to render them more diligent, watchful, humble, and dependent in their endeavours; to prepare them for the croſs, and for the conflict; and to prevent the effect of after-difficulties, diſcouragements, and temptations, by exciting the expectation of them; (*Notes*, &c. *Luke*, xiv. 25—33.) Such was the tendency of this addreſs, and ſuch by the bleſſing of God, appears to have been it's effect upon many of the Iſraelites, (31.)

V. 20. *If ye forſake*, &c.] The longer and the more open profeſſion the Iſraelites made of worſhipping Jehovah, the deeper would be their guilt and condemnation, if they at laſt apoſtatiſed to idolatry. Of this Joſhua reminded them; not that they ſhould refuſe to avow themſelves the worſhippers of the Lord; but that they might advert to the importance of that engagement, and be upon their guard againſt future temptations.

V. 23. *Incline your heart*, &c.] This expreſſion ſhews how earneſt this venerable ſervant of God was, to lead the people into the interior exerciſes of godlineſs, and to excite them to be ſpiritual and hearty, as well as entire in their religion.

V. 25. *So Joſhua*, &c.] In this way Joſhua led on his audience ſolemnly to renew the ratification of their covenant to be the Lord's people, and to adhere to his worſhip, in the moſt intelligent and deliberate manner; and then he formed the whole into a ſtatute and ordinance, which was promulgated for all Iſrael to underſtand and obey.

V. 26. *Joſhua wrote*, &c.] This ratification of the covenant ſeems to have been inſcribed in that copy of the law, which

book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

33 And

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which was laid up by the sides of the ark, as a perpetual memorial of the transaction: and it was also, probably, transcribed into all the other copies of the law then extant.

V. 27. *Behold, this stone*, &c.] This great stone would testify to succeeding generations that event, which it was set up to commemorate, and would be a witness against the people when they afterwards revolted to idolatry. A memorial of this kind likewise implied a forcible charge of insensibility against mankind, as if more regardless of their Maker than the inanimate creatures are; which, by answering the end of their creation seem to exclaim against the ingratitude and rebellion of the human species.—In this affecting manner Joshua took his leave of Israel; went home from his last, and perhaps his best, service to God and them, and was speedily taken home to his rest.

V. 32. *And the bones of Joseph*, &c.] The Israelites had carried Joseph's bones with them in all their wanderings, and had never attempted to bury them till they were peaceably settled in the land.—It is remarkable that Joshua just lived as many years as his renowned ancestor Joseph had done: he was not however buried in the same place with him, but in his own inheritance, which seems to have been the general practice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is beautiful and honourable, when zeal for the glory of God and love to the souls of men gather strength, at a time when the body is ready to drop into the grave: and whilst life is spared, and any measure of health afforded, if our hearts glow with love and zeal, we shall devise some method to serve the cause of godliness, and to fix salutary impressions upon the minds of those around us: nay sometimes when the body is least capable of executing, the soul possesses most vigour for contriving proper methods of doing good.—In repeating our exhortations, heavenly wisdom will teach us to vary the *manner* of reaching the conscience and engaging the affections; but we can never with propriety omit the commemoration of the Lord's mercies to us: by frequent meditation on that subject, we shall recollect more and more instances of his goodness: and whatever in our experience demands our gratitude to God, will also furnish us with cause of humiliation and of encouragement.—The largeness and freeness of divine mercy are so illustrated in the salvation of the *most eminent saints*, mentioned in Scripture, that the *chief of sinners* may thence take encouragement in returning to the Lord.—The inference to be drawn from every delineation of the divine character, and from the memorial of his wonderous works and abundant mercies, is this, "now therefore fear the "Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth:" fear his displeasure, seek his favour, embrace his mercy, trust his grace, reverence his authority, wait on him in his ordinances, be thankful for his benefits, and thus learn to love him and to keep his commandments. But without sincerity and truth, all professions of repentance, faith, fear, or love are mere hypocrisy, and will avail us nothing. His service must be our voluntary choice, and if we were disposed to use our reason aright, we could not but make choice of it. Blessed be his name, after all our sins, we are still invited to choose his service: and he will not reject us; if we seek him in the appointed way, and are decided in prefering his favour, worship, and obedience, to the pleasures of sin, and to the vanities of the world. But we must diligently study the nature of true religion, and what it will cost us, expose us to, and employ us in; that we may be prepared for the temptations, tribulations, conflicts, and self-denials to which it will certainly call us; and that we may be aware of our own insufficiency, and seek help and comfort from on high. The Lord our God is jealous, just, and holy: he will not be trifled with, he cannot be imposed upon, he abhors a double mind, and will not accept of a divided heart; he hates lukewarmness, and will as certainly punish the apostate, as forgive the humble believer: (*Rev.* iii. 15, 16:) but our only danger lies in forsaking him; for if we adhere to his service with an upright and willing mind, none of our mistakes, imperfections, or enemies can hurt us. We cannot serve the Lord without renouncing other masters, and *inclining our hearts* unto him; nor can we incline our hearts without his grace, which he readily bestows on every praying soul. Depending upon his assistance and merciful acceptance, notwithstanding all our difficulties and impotency, we may with confidence say, "God forbid that we should "forsake the Lord;" and we may reply to every objection "nay but we will serve the Lord;" and close all by positively averring, "the Lord our God will we serve, and his

"voice

33 And Eleazar the ſon of Aaron died, and they buried him in a hill *that pertained* to Phinehas his ſon, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

"voices will we obey:" nor need we ſtruggle the moſt open and ſolemn ratification of his covenant, by which we avouch him to be our God, and ourſelves to be his people. For though the houſe of God, the Lord's table, and even the very walls and trees before which we have uttered our ſolemn purpoſes of ſerving him, would obteſt againſt us if we denied him; and all the good, which he had done us, would become an occaſion of evil to us: yet we may truſt in him to enable us to fulfill our engagements; and be confident he will ſo put his fear into our hearts, that we ſhall not depart from him.—They who in the plaineſt terms have ſhewn the neceſſity and the difficulty of ſerving God, and the danger of forſaking him; and who have preſſed others moſt ſtrongly to count their coſt, and to prepare for the croſs; ſhould be the moſt forward to avow their own purpoſe of chooſing and cleaving to his ſervice; and their deſires, endeavours, and prayers, that the bleſſings of true religion may be the inheritance of their children. Thus in our ſeveral ſtations we all ſhould deliberately determine by the grace of God, to ſerve him ourſelves, and to do the utmoſt in our power that our houſeholds may ſerve him likewiſe. And though God alone can give grace: yet he greatly approves and bleſſes ſuch earneſt endeavours to engage, and confirm men in his ſervice: and in ſome inſtances the pious labours of one ſingle day may produce the moſt important and beneficial effects for years, or even for generations to come. After a life thus ſpent, and thus concluded, how comfortably may the believer meet the ſtroke of death, and retire to his reſt in the realms of bliſs!—Thus the moſt uſeful men, having ſerved their generation according to the will of God, one after another fall aſleep, and ſee corruption: but Jeſus, having ſpent and ended his life on earth, more aſſiduouſly and effectually, than either Joſhua, or Joſeph, aroſe from the dead, and ſaw no corruption; and not only brings his ranſomed tribes to their reſt, but liveth with them, and reigneth over them, to conſummate and perpetuate their felicity to all eternity. And wherever their bodies are interred, he will ſhortly raiſe them incorruptible, and tranſform them into the likeneſs of "his own glorious body, "according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to "ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

It is probable this Book was penned by the prophet Samuel; and it contains the hiſtory of Iſrael from the death of Joſhua to the time of Eli, for about three hundred years. The Judges, from whom its name is derived, were not a regular ſucceſſion of governors; but occaſional deliverers raiſed up of God as circumſtances required, to reſcue Iſrael from their oppreſſors, to reform the ſtate of religion, and to adminiſter juſtice to the people: and without aſſuming the pomp of regal authority, they were in fact the vicegerents of Jehovah the King of Iſrael. The ſtate of God's people does not appear in this book ſo proſperous, nor their character ſo religious, as might have been expected from what we have been conſidering in the preceding books: but we may ſuppoſe, that there were multitudes of believers among them; and that the tabernacle-ſervice was regularly ſupported and attended, (though it be not particularly recorded;) notwithſtanding the lamentable defection which took place in their national character. The whole narrative however is full of important inſtruction: it illuſtrates the ſcriptural doctrine of the corrupt bias of our fallen nature, and the manner in which men are drawn aſide into ungodlineſs or falſe religion, and the fatal effects of ſin upon all our comforts and proſpects. The juſtice, holineſs, power, and truth of God, in performing both his threatenings and promiſes, are manifeſted; in connection with his patience, compaſſion, and mercy. The nature and advantages of repentance and obedience, and the felicity of thoſe who truſt and ſerve the Lord, are very affectingly diſplayed; and the whole is ſuited to render the teachable and attentive reader, watchful and circumſpect; to warn thoſe, "who think they ſtand to take heed leſt they fall;" and to encourage thoſe who are fallen, to return to our forgiving God, in the way which he hath preſcribed.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. The conduct, and ſucceſs of Judah, and Simeon, in their wars with the Canaanites, v. 1—20. 2d. Of Benjamin, v. 21. 3d. Of Ephraim and Manaſſeh, v. 22—29. 4th. Of Zebulun, Aſher, and Naphtali, v. 30—33. 5th. Of Dan, 34—36.

NOW after the death of Joſhua it came to paſs, that the children of Iſrael aſked the LORD, ſaying, Who ſhall go up for us againſt the Canaanites firſt, to fight againſt them?

2 And the LORD ſaid, Judah ſhall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hand.

3 And Judah ſaid unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight againſt the Canaanites, and I likewiſe will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they ſlew of them in Bezek ten thouſand men.

5 And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek; and they fought againſt him, and they ſlew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they purſued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.

7 And Adoni-bezek ſaid, Threeſcore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my tables: as I have done, ſo God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jeruſalem, and there he died.

8 (Now the children of Judah had fought againſt Jeruſalem, and had taken it, and ſmitten it with the edge of the ſword, and ſet the city on fire,)

9 And afterwards the children of Judah went down to fight againſt the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the ſouth, and in the valley.

10 And Judah went againſt the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron, (now the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba,) and they ſlew Sheſhai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

11 And from thence he went againſt the inhabitants of Debir: (and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-ſepher:)

12 And Caleb ſaid, he that ſmiteth Kirjath-ſepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achſah my daughter to wife.

13 And Othniel the ſon of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achſah his daughter to wife.

14 And it came to paſs, when ſhe came *to him*, that ſhe moved him to aſk of her father a field: and ſhe lighted from off *her* aſs; and Caleb ſaid unto her, What wilt thou?

15 And ſhe ſaid unto him, Give me a bleſſing: for thou haſt given me a ſouth land, give me alſo ſprings of water. And Caleb gave her the upper ſprings and the nether ſprings.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moſes' father-in-law, went up out of the city of

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Who ſhall go up?* &c.] The Iſraelites were convinced that the war againſt the Canaanites was to be continued; but they were in doubt, about the manner in which it was to be conducted, after the death of Joſhua, and which tribe was to have the precedency: and in theſe reſpects they enquired of the Lord, probably by Urim and Thummim. It would have been well, if they had continued in the ſame mind; but ſloth, cowardice, and unbelief, and perhaps a misjudged lenity prevailed with them, to leave their work unfiniſhed; which created them almoſt an infinity of trouble, and miſery afterwards.

V. 2. *Judah ſhall go up*, &c.] This numerous and valiant tribe, whence the Meſſiah was to deſcend, and which was in all things to have the precedency, was directed to take the lead in this war, and by their example to embolden their brethren, and to mark out to them the path to victory, and proſperity.

V. 7. *Adoni-bezek*, &c.] That is "The Lord of Bezek." This prince had, it ſeems, been a great warrior, and a ſevere tyrant over his vanquiſhed enemies: he had had no fewer than ſeventy of the petty princes of thoſe times, one after another his priſoners: and having diſabled them with great diſgrace and pain by cutting off their thumbs, and great toes, he forced them to gather their food as dogs under his table. The Iſraelites, hearing of this, probably by divine direction, retaliated upon him; and his own conſcience extorted from him a confeſſion of the juſtice of God in this puniſhment.

V. 8. *Had taken it*, &c.] Judah ſeized upon the greateſt part of Jeruſalem, though it lay within the lot of Benjamin, and burnt ſome part of it; but not the whole, for the Benjamites dwelt in part of it immediately after, (21.)

V. 10—15.] (*Notes, Joſhua*, c. xv. v. 13—19.) Probably Caleb was commander in this whole expedition.

V. 16. *The children of the Kenite*, &c.] The deſcendants of Hobab, the ſon of Jethro, (who it ſeems acceded to the

palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderneſs of Judah, which *lieth* in the ſouth of Arad: and they went and dwelt among the people.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they ſlew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly deſtroyed it: (and the name of the city was called Hormah:)

18 Alſo Judah took Gaza with the coaſt thereof, and Aſkelon with the coaſt thereof, and Ekron with the coaſt thereof.

19 And the LORD was with Judah, and he drave out *the inhabitants of* the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, becauſe they had chariots of iron.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moſes ſaid: and he expelled thence the three ſons of Anak.

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebuſites that inhabited Jeruſalem; but the Jebuſites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jeruſalem unto this day.

22 And the houſe of Joſeph, they alſo went up againſt Beth-el: and the LORD *was* with them.

23 And the houſe of Joſeph ſent to deſcry Bethel: (now the name of the city before *was* Luz.)

24 And the ſpies ſaw a man come forth out of the city, and they ſaid unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will ſhew thee mercy.

25 And when he ſhewed them the entrance into the city, they ſmote the city with the edge of the ſword: but they let go the man and all his family.

26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which *is* the name thereof unto this day.

27 Neither did Manaſſeh drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth-ſhean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

28 And it came to paſs when Iſrael was ſtrong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol: but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.

31 Neither did Aſher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:

32 But the Aſherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-ſhemeſh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anah; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheleſs the inhabitants of Beth-ſhemeſh and of Beth-anah became tributaries unto them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not ſuffer them to come down to the valley:

35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount

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invitation given him by Moſes, (*Num.* c. x. v. 29—32;) at their firſt entrance into Canaan, pitched their tents, at or near Jericho, which is ſuppoſed to be meant by the city of Palm-trees: but afterwards they had their portion aſſigned them in the borders of the wilderneſs, where they ſeem to have lived a very quiet, and peaceable life; little interfering in public affairs.

V. 19. *But could not drive out*, &c.] Not becauſe the Lord failed to help them, but becauſe their courage, and faith failed them, at the ſight of the iron chariots; and when they had loſt their confidence in God, they could do nothing: (*Matt.* c. xiv. v. 30, 31. c. xvii. v. 19, 20. *Mark*, c. vi. v. 5, 6.)

V. 26. *The man went out*, &c.] This perſon betrayed his country, not out of faith in God, or love to Iſrael, but out of fear, and to ſave his life: therefore, when he found himſelf at liberty, he would not unite intereſts with the people of God; but retiring to his countrymen, who had ſought ſhelter in ſome of the adjacent regions, he built a city, which he called after his own city, not Bethel, or the Houſe of God; but Luz according to it's old name.

V. 28. *They did not*, &c.] They neglected their opportunity, through ſelf-indulgence, when they had them in their power; and afterwards they found themſelves unable to drive them out: thus their ſin prepared their puniſhment, and their love of preſent eaſe became the cauſe of their perpetual diſquiet.

V. 35. *The houſe of Joſeph*, &c.] In the diſtreſs of the

Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the houſe of Joſeph prevailed, ſo that they became tributaries.

36 And the coaſt of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. An angel reproving the Iſraelites, and their lamentations, and ſacrifice, v. 1—5. 2d. A retroſpect to the death, and burial of Joſhua, v. 6—13. 3d. An abſtract of their rebellions, and diſtreſſes; of the Lord's judgments, and mercies; and of his refuſal to drive out the Canaanites; with the reaſon, why they were permitted to continue in the land, v. 14—23.

AND an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and ſaid, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I ſware unto your fathers; and I ſaid, I will never break my covenant with you.

2 And ye ſhall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye ſhall throw down

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Danites they came to their aſſiſtance, and enabled them to prevail againſt their enemies: but they none of them puſhed their advantage, ſatisfying themſelves with rendering thoſe tributaries, whom the Lord had commanded them to deſtroy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No detached efforts, however judicious, and ſpirited, without ſteady and conſtant perſeverance, can effect important changes, rectify abuſes in church, or ſtate, or promote a general revival of true religion. Such attempts may be compared to the raiſing of a large weight to a great height from the earth, in which all the former labour is loſt, if the exertion ceaſes before the object be fully accompliſhed. The caſe is the ſame in the Chriſtians warfare with the world, the fleſh, and the devil: all, that hath apparently been effected, will come to nothing, if he relax his diligence, or revert to carnal ſecurity. Under his command, after his example, and emboldened by his ſucceſs, who was deſcended from Judah, we are called upon to wage this war, and are aſſured, that "the Lord hath delivered our enemies into "our hands." They, who have the precedency in rank, or reputation, ſhould go before others in every good work, without being diſmayed by dangers and difficulties, that they may animate them by their example; and the ſtrongeſt ought not to deſpiſe, but to value the aſſiſtance of the weakeſt; and it becomes the people of God to unite together, and help each other againſt their common enemies: and eſpecially to aſſiſt the whole "church militant here on "earth," with their conſtant, and fervent prayers. We are ſure to have all profitable ſucceſs, when we engage in any enterprize according to the Lord's direction, and in dependance on his help: and whatever labour, conduct, or courage we diſplay, or whatever human aid we employ, to him the whole glory belongs. What a ſlippery place is worldly proſperity! eſpecially when it increaſes pride, inſolence, or cruelty! for a "haughty ſpirit goes before a fall;" and men may often read their crimes in their puniſhment: and at laſt every mouth ſhall be ſtopped, and all ſinners ſhall be conſtrained, to admit the juſtice of God in their extremeſt miſeries. Happy they, who juſtify him in their temporal afflictions, plead guilty before his mercy ſeat, and by repentance and faith ſeek deliverance from the wrath to come. Great things might be atchieved by the profeſſors of the goſpel, if they unitedly endeavoured to promote the common cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs; for then the Lord would be with them, and every mountain would ſink into a plain. But when outward difficulties are viewed by the eye of ſenſe, and the almighty power of God is forgotten, our hearts grow diſcouraged, our expectations feeble, and our attempts timid; and then no wonder that we do not proſper; for according to our faith will be our vigour, zeal, and ſucceſs. But love of eaſe, indulgence, and preſent worldly advantages, both ſpring from, and foſter unbelief. Thus many an awakened ſinner, who ſeemed to have clear eſcaped ſatan's bondage, is entangled again, and overcome, and his laſt ſtate is worſe, than the firſt. Thus many a believer, who begins well, is hindered: he grows negligent, and unwatchful, and afraid of the croſs; his graces languiſh, his luſts revive; ſatan perceives his advantage, and plies him with ſuitable temptations; the world recovers it's hold; he loſes his peace, brings guilt into his conſcience, anguiſh into his heart, diſcredit upon his character, and reproach upon the goſpel; his hands are tied, his mouth is cloſed, and his uſefulneſs ruined: and though, through ſharp rebukes, and ſalutary chaſtiſements, he is ſo recovered, that he doth not finally periſh: yet he may lament through his remaining days, and groan upon his dying bed, to reflect what opportunities of glorifying God, and ſerving his church, he hath irrecoverably loſt: nay perhaps in that ſolemn hour, he will be diſtreſſed with perplexing doubts about the ſtate of his own ſoul. Thus even the very beſt of Chriſtians ſuffer ſome loſs, and fail of living up to the extent of their privileges, and uſefulneſs. Let us then watch, and be ſober, and purſue our victory againſt every inbred foe not content with ſuppoſed delivery from the dominion of ſin, but aiming continually to weaken, and crucify the fleſh with it's affections, and luſts, even unto entire extirpation. For we can have no fellowſhip with the enemies of God within us, or around us, but to our hurt; and therefore our only wiſdom, and intereſt is to declare, and maintain unceaſing war againſt them, even unto the end of our days.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *An angel*, &c.] The whole language of the reproof here given demonſtrates who this angel was; not a prophet, or a created angel; for ſuch meſſengers would not have ſpoken in the firſt perſon, without affixing, "Thus ſaith the Lord:" but the great angel of the covenant, the Word, and Son of God, who ſpake with divine authority, as Jehovah, as HE, who brought them out of Egypt, put them in poſſeſſion of Canaan, entered into covenant with them, gave them com-

their

their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this?

3 Wherefore I alſo ſaid, I will not drive them out from before you; but they ſhall be *as thorns* in your ſides, and their gods ſhall be a ſnare unto you.

4 And it came to paſs, when the angel of the LORD ſpake theſe words unto all the children of Iſrael, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they ſacrificed there unto the LORD.

6 And when Joſhua had let the people go, the children of Iſrael went every man unto his inheritance to poſſeſs the land.

7 And the people ſerved the LORD all the days of Joſhua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joſhua, who had ſeen all the great works of the LORD that he did for Iſrael.

8 And Joſhua the ſon of Nun, the ſervant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north ſide of the hill Gaaſh.

10 And alſo all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there aroſe another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Iſrael.

11 And the children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the LORD, and ſerved Baalim.

12 And they forſook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themſelves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

13 And they forſook the LORD, and ſerved Baal and Aſhtaroth.

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he delivered them into the hands of ſpoilers that ſpoiled them, and he ſold them into the hands of their enemies round about, ſo that they could not any longer ſtand before their enemies.

15 Whitherſoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was againſt them for evil, as the LORD had ſaid, and as the LORD had ſworn unto them: and they were greatly diſtreſſed.

16 Nevertheleſs, the LORD raiſed up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of thoſe that ſpoiled them.

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themſelves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not ſo.

18 And when the LORD raiſed them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: (for it repented the LORD becauſe of their groanings, by reaſon of them that oppreſſed them, and vexed them.)

19 And it came to paſs, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themſelves* more than their fathers, in follow-

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mandments, and now called them to account for their diſobedience. Probably this divine perſon made his firſt appearance, and declared the cauſe of his coming at Gilgal: (*Joſhua*, c. iv, v. 4, 5;) from thence he went, and appeared amongſt them at Shiloh, where they were aſſembled at ſome of their ſolemn feaſts. For it is probably from their ſacrifice, that they were at Shiloh, which was called Bochim, or the weepers; becauſe of their weeping. But though the people ſhewed ſigns of deep humiliation, the conſequent hiſtory evinces, that a general reformation did not take place.

V. 6—10.] This part of the hiſtory ſeems to be repeated, in order to ſhew the occaſion that there was of the ſevere reproof, which had been given them. Whilſt Joſhua lived the people had ſerved the Lord with conſiderable diligence; but after his death, and that of the elders, they relapſed into idolatry. The place, where Joſhua was buried, is here called Timnath-heres, inſtead of Timnath-ſerah: the word *heres* ſignifies the ſun, and it hath been aſſerted, that it was ſo called, becauſe of ſome memorial there erected of the Lord's miraculouſly retarding the courſe of the ſun, at his requeſt.

V. 11—13. *Baalim, Aſhtaroth.*] Both theſe words are plural, the one maſculine, and the other feminine; and they ſeem to be uſed generally for all the gods, and goddeſſes, which were worſhipped by their heathen neighbours.

V. 14. *He ſold them*, &c.] As the judge was uſed to ſell the criminal, or the creditor the debtor, for a ſlave, that the injured party might be reimburſed by their price: ſo the Lord recovered, as it were, that glory, by puniſhing the Iſraelites, of which they had robbed him by their ſins; and made the very Canaanites the inſtruments of his righteous indignation.

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ing other gods to ſerve them, and to bow down unto them: they ceaſed not from their own doings, nor from their ſtubborn way.

20 And the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael; and he ſaid, Becauſe that this people have tranſgreſſed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

21 I alſo will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joſhua left when he died;

22 That through them I may prove Iſrael, whether they will keep the way of the LORD, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not.

23 Therefore the LORD left thoſe nations, without driving them out haſtily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joſhua.

V. 23. *Neither delivered he*, &c.] The Lord foreſaw the future conduct of the Iſraelites; and therefore ſo ordered it in his Providence, that a remnant of the Canaanites ſhould be ſpared; that by them their proneneſs to idolatry might both be manifeſted, and chaſtiſed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The goodneſs of God to man, his faithful engagements to thoſe, who truſt in him, and the beneficial tendency of all his precepts combine to enhance the evil of every tranſgreſſion: and frequently men will gratify their craving luſts, though their own reaſon and conſcience teſtify, that they are acting a fooliſh, and ungrateful part; for, as no good reaſon can be given for diſobedience, it is much eaſier to convince the judgment that ſinful purſuits are wrong, than to diſpoſe the heart to renounce them. But if men cannot ſtand before the rebukes of God's word, and the convictions of their own conſcience; how will they be able to ſtand before the tribunal of the holy, heart-ſearching Judge? who now in the endeared character of a Saviour, and in the mild accents of love, warns and perſuades them, but in vain, to repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. "Whom he loves, he rebukes, and "chaſtens," and with increaſing ſeverity, until they become zealous, and repent: and all temporal afflictions are in their tendency *caſtigatory*, and warn men to forſake ſin, and ſeek forgiveneſs, before it be too late: but the eternal puniſhment of the world to come will be entirely penal, the final vengeance of God upon his incurable enemies. It is pleaſing to ſee men weep for their ſins: but though ſuch relentings attend that godly ſorrow, which worketh repentance unto ſalvation, not to be repented of; yet they alſo frequently wear off, and leave the heart unchanged, and ſin unſubdued. Our tears, and prayers, and amendment cannot expiate ſin; that can only be effected by the ſacrifice of Chriſt. And faith in him may be profeſſed, and the memorials of his dying love attended upon, with great apparent affection, yet without renovation of heart, and newneſs of life. Over many ſuch ſuppoſed converts we have to mourn, and to regret, "that their goodneſs is as a morning "cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away;" (*Hoſea*, c. vi. v. 4.) The worſhip of God in it's own nature is joy, praiſe, and thankſgiving, and our crimes alone render weeping needful: yet conſidering what we are, and what we have done, it is much to be wiſhed, that our religious aſſemblies were more frequently called Bochim, "the place "of the weepers;" "for bleſſed are they that mourn, for "they ſhall be comforted."—Were we duly attentive to the word of God we might foreſee many of thoſe events, which take place in his Providence. We might eſpecially foretel ſevere afflictions to thoſe godly perſons, who aſſociate, and connect themſelves with the openly profane; and to thoſe, who relax their diligence in mortifying, and ſtriving againſt ſin, and in watching againſt temptation. Alas! that ſhew of religion, which there is in times of general reformation, often ariſes from temporary affections, and perſonal regards: when the influence, and example of ſome reſpected, or beloved perſon ceaſe, when there is no longer any fear of grieving, or being rebuked by him, and when the emotion of the paſſions hath had time to ſubſide, men's unmortified luſts again recover the aſcendancy: and many fair appearances die away. We have need therefore to examine how matters ſtand with ourſelves, and to pray without ceaſing, "that we may be rooted and grounded in love, and "that Chriſt may indeed dwell in our hearts by faith." Believing parents ſhould be very diligent in inſtructing their children, and very earneſt in praying, that they may inherit their faith, and grace: and the ſpeedy diſappearance of religion, after it hath been very flouriſhing, muſt ever be aſcribed in great meaſure to their negligence in this reſpect: and very often the ignorance and ungodlineſs of children are a diſgrace to the parent's memory. But the carnal mind of man is enmity againſt God, and the tendency of human nature is to apoſtacy, and the vileſt luſt, or the meaneſt worldly object, will be preferred to his favour, and the pleaſure of his ſervice, by thoſe, who have the benefit of his written word and preached goſpel; unleſs by a continual exertion of Almighty power, his grace is communicated to, and his image is renewed upon their hearts. This is the cauſe of all human miſery, in time, and to eternity: when men rob God of his glory, he will ſell them for their ſin, and ſatisfy his juſtice in their puniſhment: and how can they but be wretched, againſt whom are the oath, and the hand of the immutable, and Almighty God! Their heavieſt diſtreſſes on earth, unleſs timely repentance intervene, are only the forerunners of eternal miſery. The vileſt of the profane are more likely to proſper, for a time, than apoſtate profeſſors: nay backſliding believers are more ſure to experience affliction in this world, than any other perſons. Yet the Lord hath long-patience, and manifeſts great compaſſion to his people; he is ready to forgive, and to relieve; he raiſes up inſtruments to effect their deliverance, and over-rules their chaſtiſements for their good: and upon the whole of his dealings with them, it will appear manifeſt, that they are not ſaved for the ſake of their own righteouſneſs, but for the ſake of his great name; that it is of his "mercies, that they are "not conſumed" and that he ſaves them from, and notwithſtanding, their manifold tranſgreſſions. The more the human heart is proved, the worſe it is manifeſted to be;

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1ſt. The nations left in the land, v. 1—4. 2d. Iſrael's apoſtacy, God's diſpleaſure, their oppreſſion by the king of Meſopotamia, their deliverance by Othniel, and ſubſequent reſt, v. 5—11. 3d. Their relapſe into ſin, their bondage to the king of Moab, and deliverance by Ehud, v. 12—30. 4th. Shamgar protecting Iſrael from the Philiſtines, &c. v. 31.

NOW theſe *are* the nations which the LORD left to prove Iſrael by them; (*even* as many *of Iſrael* as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

2 Only that the generations of the children of Iſrael might know to teach them war, at the leaſt ſuch as before knew nothing thereof;)

3 *Namely*, five lords of the Philiſtines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

4 And they were to prove Iſrael by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moſes.

5 And the children of Iſrael dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and the Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebuſites:

6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their ſons, and ſerved their gods.

7 And the children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and ſerved Baalim and the groves;

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he ſold them into the hand of Chuſhan-riſhathaim king of Meſopotamia: and the children of Iſrael ſerved Chuſhan-riſhathaim eight years.

9 And when the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD, the LORD raiſed up a deliverer of the children of Iſrael, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the ſon of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

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whilſt "we ceaſe not from our doings," we can only be ſtubborn, and rebellious: for his own glory the Lord tries men, as ſilver is tried, and whilſt he diſtinguiſhes betwixt thoſe, who chooſe, and thoſe, who forſake his ways; he will ſecure to himſelf all the praiſe of all that is good in his people. Too late his enemies will curſe their folly for neglecting thoſe things, which were commanded them: and the reflection that their opportunity is loſt for ever will complete their miſery. Let us then without delay obey the goſpel call, declare war againſt every ſin, and follow after holineſs, unto the end of our days, that we may have an abundant entrance into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord, and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 2. *Might know to teach them war*, &c.] As the Iſraelites were ſurrounded by many warlike nations; and as they were a type of the church *militant* here on earth, they were not to be enervated by ſloth, and luxury, but inured to hardſhip, and conflict: this the Lord was pleaſed to effect by the remains of the devoted nations, whom they ſpared, when they ought to have deſtroyed them, and they were in conſequence engaged in continual conteſts with them. They had moreover taſted the ſweets of victory, without feeling the evils of war, in their firſt conqueſt of the land; but they proved ungrateful for the mercy, and left their work unfiniſhed; and were therefore made to feel the evils of war, without the advantages of victory, in their future conflicts.

V. 4. *To know whether*, &c.] Trials, and temptations diſcover whether ſin, or grace have dominion in the heart; and are therefore employed of God to detect the ſecret hypocriſy of the falſe profeſſor, and to manifeſt, exerciſe, and ſtrengthen the graces of the true believer: and this diſcovery is very comfortable to the upright, of ſalutary tendency to thoſe, who deceive themſelves, edifying to the church, and honourable to God, and true religion.

V. 5. *Dwelt among*, &c.] Inſtead of attempting to extirpate the inhabitants of the land, the Iſraelites endeavoured to live amicably with them; this induced them to intermarry with them, and then to conform to their idolatrous worſhip; until numbers of them had utterly apoſtatized from God, in that very land, wherein by his tabernacle he dwelt in the midſt of them.

V. 7. *The groves.*] Thoſe idols, which were worſhipped under the ſhade of thick trees, (*Deut.* c. xvi. v. 21.)

V. 8. *King of Meſopotamia*, &c.] As this prince reigned beyond the Euphrates, his oppreſſing the Iſraelites, who lived at ſo great a diſtance, appeared the more evidently to be the effect of God's diſpleaſure.

V. 9. *Cried unto*, &c.] In their proſperity they forgot the Lord: but in their diſtreſs they found that their idols, and idolatrous allies, could not help them; and then they remembered the wonderful works of the Lord, and began to pray unto him, though not until they had ſmarted under the rod for the ſpace of eight years: and he being rich in mercy, was pleaſed to hear their prayer, notwithſtanding their heinous provocations, and ſtirred up the ſpirit of Othniel to effect their deliverance: and probably there was a conſiderable reformation for ſome time afterwards. Nor ſhould the method, in which this deliverance was accompliſhed, paſs unnoticed. Doubtleſs Othniel had lamented over the degeneracy, and miſery of his brethren: but he attempted nothing, until "the Spirit of the Lord "came upon him:" then he began "with judging Iſrael," that is, with attempting to reform abuſes, and revive re-

10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Iſrael, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chuſhan-riſhathaim king of Meſopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed againſt Chuſhan-riſhathaim.

11 And the land had reſt forty years: and Othniel the ſon of Kenaz died.

12 And the children of Iſrael did evil again in the ſight of the LORD: and the LORD ſtrengthened Eglon the king of Moab againſt Iſrael, becauſe they had done evil in the ſight of the LORD.

13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and ſmote Iſrael, and poſſeſſed the city of palm-trees.

14 So the children of Iſrael ſerved Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

15 But when the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD, the LORD raiſed them up a deliverer, Ehud the ſon of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Iſrael ſent a preſent unto Eglon the king of Moab.

16 But Ehud made him a dagger (which had two edges) of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

17 And he brought the preſent unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon *was* a very fat man.

18 And when he had made an end to offer the preſent, he ſent away the people that bare the preſent.

19 But he himſelf turned again from the quarries that *were* by Gilgal, and ſaid, I have a ſecret errand unto thee, O king: who ſaid, keep ſilence. And all that ſtood by him went out from him.

20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was ſitting in a ſummer-parlour, which he had for himſelf alone: and Ehud ſaid, I have a meſſage from God unto thee. And he aroſe out of *his* ſeat.

21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right-thigh, and thruſt it into his belly.

22 And the haft alſo went in after the blade; and the fat cloſed upon the blade, ſo that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly: and the dirt came out.

23 Then Ehud went forth through the

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ligion; and then he went forth to war, and prevailed over their foreign enemies; for the Lord delivered them into his hands.

V. 11. *Forty years*, &c.] According to a ſcheme of chronology ſhortly to be mentioned, I would compute theſe years from the death of Joſhua, to that of Othniel; though it be impoſſible to aſcertain, how long it was before he was raiſed up to be their Judge. But if we would keep within the Scripture bounds, we muſt place the years of Iſrael's oppreſſions, under thoſe aſſigned to ſome of their judges; and if we date theſe from Joſhua's death, a very ſimple, (though not certain) method will guide us through this obſcure period of the hiſtory.

V. 12. *Strengthened*, &c.] The Lord had formed Eglon of a ſtout and valiant ſpirit, had raiſed him to conſiderable power, and proſperity as a prince, and afforded him ſucceſs in his enterprize againſt the Iſraelites.

V. 14. *Eighteen years.*] Their guilt was more aggravated, and their ſpirits were more ſtubborn; and therefore it was the longer before they began to cry unto the Lord; and it was his pleaſure, that their chaſtiſement ſhould be more ſevere, and of longer continuance.

V. 15. *A man left-handed*, &c.] Some have ſuppoſed, that Ehud could uſe both hands alike well: but if he were unable to uſe his right hand, Eglon would be the leſs apt to ſuſpect him, and he would be no leſs ſuitable an inſtrument for the Lord to work by: (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 29, 30.) The Iſraelites had by him ſent their tribute, under the name of a preſent; and the Lord, who raiſed him up to deliver Iſrael, doubtleſs directed him to take this opportunity of executing his vengeance on the tyrant. Ehud was the deputy of the King of Iſrael, and acted by commiſſion from him: Eglon had uſurped the Lord's throne, and became his rival, and was ordered to be thus put to death. But Ehud's conduct cannot poſſibly be drawn into precedent, or authoriſe the aſſaſſination of kings, however tyrannical, or perſecuting; without any man were called to act by the ſame *evident* commiſſion from the God of heaven. The law of being ſubject to principalities and powers in all things lawful is the rule of our conduct.

V. 19. *The quarries*, &c.] Or graven images, probably the idols of Moab, which were ſet up in contempt of the God of Iſrael.

I have a ſecret errand, &c.] Ehud had ingratiated himſelf with Eglon by the preſent: and he had no ſuſpicion of one, whom he ſuppoſed to be unarmed: and it is likely, he expected ſome information concerning ſtate affairs, or the ſecret combination of his countrymen: but he was ſtrangely infatuated to truſt himſelf alone with an Iſraelite.

V. 20. *From God*, &c.] The word here uſed is common to the true God, and the ſuppoſed deities of the Gentiles. Eglon therefore expecting ſome oracle from God, roſe up in reverence, and afforded Ehud the opportunity of effecting his purpoſe. A ſecret errand, a meſſage from God he had indeed with him, but it was of a far different nature, than Eglon expected.

V. 22.] Thus would this powerful oppreſſor be found

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porch, and ſhut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

24 When he was gone out his ſervants came; and when they ſaw that behold the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they ſaid, Surely he covereth his feet in *his* ſummer-chamber.

25 And they tarried till they were aſhamed; and behold he opened not the doors of the parlour: therefore they took a key and opened *them*; and behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth.

26 And Ehud eſcaped while they tarried, and paſſed beyond the quarries, and eſcaped unto Seirath.

27 And it came to paſs when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Iſrael went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

28 And he ſaid unto them, Follow after me; for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab, and ſuffered not a man to paſs over.

29 And they ſlew of Moab at that time about ten thouſand men, all luſty, and all men of valour; and there eſcaped not a man.

30 So Moab was ſubdued that day under the hand of Iſrael. And the land had reſt fourſcore years.

31 And after him was Shamgar the ſon of Anath, which ſlew of the Philiſtines ſix hundred men with an ox-goad; and he alſo delivered Iſrael.

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weltering in his own blood, and excrements, in the moſt diſgraceful manner, in that very place, where he had ſo often indulged his pride, ſloth, and luxury. As he fell without any noiſe, and died without being enabled to cry for help, Ehud had a full opportunity of eſcaping: and he departed with that circumſpection, and deliberation, which ſprang from confidence in God, and a conſciouſneſs of having done his duty.

V. 29. *Ten thouſand*, &c.] So ſmall an army of valiant ſoldiers ſerved to curb the whole kingdom of Iſrael, when once it was ſubjected: but they were eaſily reinforced from beyond Jordan. Therefore Ehud took poſſeſſion of the fords, not only that none might eſcape, but that no more might come to their aſſiſtance. And when their prince was dead, they were too much intimidated to make any effectual aſſiſtance. Probably Eglon had fixed his reſidence weſt of Jordan, near the place where Jericho had ſtood.

V. 30. *Fourſcore years.*] They had reſt, until eighty years, from the cloſe of the aforementioned forty years, were expired. Yet the deliverance from the Philiſtines ſeems to coincide with this part of the hiſtory. Shamgar, probably being employed in agriculture, when the Philiſtines invaded the land, was ſupernaturally animated to attack them, and miraculouſly aſſiſted, in making this havock amongſt them with an ox goad, or plough-ſhare; for ſo ſome tranſlate it: this broke their force, and ſpirits for a conſiderable time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Temptations, and trials detect the wickedneſs of the hearts of ſinners; and manifeſt, exerciſe, and ſtrengthen the graces of believers: who, being called to be ſoldiers, muſt learn and practice war all their days, and in their conflict with ſatan, ſin, and this evil world muſt be inured to hardſhips, watchfulneſs, and ſelf-denial, for their future and eternal good. *In* this evil world they are conſtrained to live, but they are not *of* it, and are forbidden to conform to it: this reſtriction marks the difference betwixt them, and mere profeſſors in every age; for the friendſhip of the world is more fatal than it's enmity: the latter can only kill the body; but the former murders many a precious ſoul. When the heart is not eſtabliſhed by grace, the deſcent from the moſt plauſible profeſſion is natural, and almoſt imperceptible. Civility to ungodly people; in which to be ſure there can be no harm, by an eaſy ſtep introduces them to more intimate connexions: ſome conceſſions muſt in this caſe be made, and they muſt be a little conformable to ſuch kind friends, or relatives; and it is not eaſy to draw the line: one compliance prepares for another, until a man's profeſſion ends in apoſtacy. But if any true believers thus backſlide from God, they ſhall ſurely, and ſpeedily be corrected, and know by experience that the friendſhip of the wicked, and the gain of tranſgreſſion will not profit them in the day of trouble here: how then can they profit the ſinner in the day of wrath hereafter? Thoſe afflictions, however ſevere, and tedious, which bring the Lord to our remembrance, and excite a ſpirit of humble earneſt prayer, are very precious bleſſings. And as he is ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them, that call upon him; as he will not upbraid the penitent with his ſins, nor fail to appear for his relief, how wonderful is it, that men, groaning under their burdens, are ſo long ere they cry unto him for help? For if we would get out of trouble effectually, we muſt begin with repentance, and ſeeking forgiveneſs of our ſins; and then in due time deliverance, reſt, and inward peace, and comfort will enſue. But, alas! how inveterate is man's propenſity to be ungrateful to the Lord! And how readily do we relapſe into our former offences! And the ſecret hiſtory of every one of us, even if we are kept from open ſcandals, or viſible declenſions, greatly tallies with the hiſtory of Iſrael: Oh, fooliſh people, and unwiſe, do we thus requite the Lord, that bought us! This renders repeated chaſtiſements abſolutely neceſſary; for ſo perverſe are we, that the more indulgently we are treated by our heavenly Father,

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſrael relapſing into ſin, and oppreſſed by the Canaanites, v. 1—3. 2d. Deborah judging Iſrael, and conſulting with Barak for their deliverance, v. 4—9. 3d. Barak deſtroying the army of the Canaanites, v. 10—17. 4th. Siſera, their commander, ſlain by Jael the Kenite, v. 18—22. 5th. The deſtruction of Jabin king of Canaan, v. 23—24.

AND the children of Iſrael again did evil in the ſight of the LORD when Ehud was dead.

2 And the LORD ſold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whoſe hoſt *was* Siſera, which dwelt in Haroſheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron: and twenty years he mightily oppreſſed the children of Iſrael.

4 And Deborah, a propheteſs, the wife of Lapidoth, ſhe judged Iſrael at that time.

5 And ſhe dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Iſrael came up to her for judgment.

6 And ſhe ſent and called Barak the ſon of Abinoam out of Kedeſh-naphtali, and ſaid unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Iſrael commanded, *ſaying*, Go, and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thouſand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kiſhon, Siſera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

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the more diſobedient we generally prove. Yet after our moſt aggravated provocations, and in our deepeſt diſtreſſes, if we again cry unto him, he will deliver us; and the meaneſt inſtrument, or the moſt unlikely method ſhall be effectual, if he appoints and bleſſes them: but unleſs the grace of God ſoften our hearts, repeated judgments, mercies, and convictions concur to render them more ſtout, and callous: luxury, ſloth, and pride fatten men for deſtruction: the Lord delights to abaſe thoſe, who exalt themſelves againſt him, and oppreſs his people, and to diſgrace to the depth of infamy, as well as to caſt into the depth of miſery, thoſe, who have been the haughty, and the terrible of the earth. What meſſage from God, but a meſſage of vengeance can a proud rebel expect? And ſuch a meſſage is evidently contained in the word of God: and though *we* are not now commiſſioned, or allowed to be the executioners of it: yet his miniſters muſt boldly declare it, without fearing the frown, or reſpecting the perſons of ſinners. Bleſſed be God, they have another meſſage to deliver, a meſſage of mercy, and free ſalvation; and that of vengeance only belongs to thoſe, who neglect, and refuſe the gracious propoſal.—With reverent attention let us hear this meſſage, in humble faith, let us ſeek for, and accept of this great ſalvation; let us beg of God to give us repentance, and enable us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance: let us put ourſelves under his protection, and conduct: let us enliſt under the Redeemer's banner, put on his armour, and declare determined war againſt his, and our enemies. He hath begun our triumphs by his victory over the powers of darkneſs upon the croſs; and over the King of terrors by his reſurrection: the trumpet of his goſpel calls us to follow after him; obeying that ſummons, the day will be ours, and we ſhall conquer, triumph and reign with him in glory for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *In Haroſheth*, &c.] Jabin king of Hazor had formerly confederated againſt Iſrael, and Joſhua had ſlain him, and burned his city, (*Joſh.* c. xi.). In proceſs of time the Canaanites had rebuilt it, and another Jabin, probably deſcended from him, reigned there with great power. Hazor lay in the northern part of the land, and probably Haroſheth in the neighbourhood. The remains of the nations of Canaan having in great numbers reſorted thither to aſſiſt, and be protected by Siſera, the commander of Jabin's army, in whom he placed great confidence, it was called "Haroſheth of the Gentiles," or nations. The offending Iſraelites were grievouſly oppreſſed by theſe enemies for twenty years, before they heartily ſet about reformation, or united in prayers to the Lord for deliverance. Though Deborah, in conſequence of her extraordinary call to judge Iſrael, could not *perſonally* undertake thoſe military expeditions, which generally diſtinguiſhed theſe deliverers, ſhe might uſe her authority to repreſs iniquity, to reform religion, and to execute impartial juſtice to the people. She is called the wife of Lapidoth; but the termination is feminine, and ſeldom uſed for the names of men; hence it hath been queſtioned whether the paſſage be aright tranſlated. Some ſuppoſe it to be the name of the town, to which ſhe belonged; and others refer it, according to the ſignification of the original word, either to her occupation, as employed in making lamps; or to the inſpiration of the Almighty, with which ſhe was favoured. As we read no more of her huſband, and as it is otherwiſe ſufficiently demonſtrable "that marriage is "honourable amongſt all men," it is of no conſequence to determine, whether ſhe were, or were not married.

V. 5. *Under the palm-tree*, &c.] That is, in ſome lowly habitation, ſhaded by a large palm-tree, more ſuited to the ſanctity of a propheteſs, than the dignity of a judge.

V. 6. *Barak*, &c.] It is not certain whether Barak had previouſly been employed by Deborah or not. But by direction from God, he was at this time, ſingled out by her, commanded whither to go, and what troops to raiſe, and aſſured of both opportunity to attack, and aſſiſtance to ſubdue the enemies of Iſrael.

8 And Barak ſaid unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go.

9 And ſhe ſaid, I will ſurely go with thee: notwithſtanding the journey that thou takeſt ſhall not be for thine honour; for the LORD ſhall ſell Siſera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah aroſe, and went with Barak to Kedeſh.

10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedeſh: and he went up with ten thouſand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moſes, had ſevered himſelf from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which *is* by Kedeſh.

12 And they ſhewed Siſera, that Barak the ſon of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

13 And Siſera gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Haroſheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kiſhon.

14 And Deborah ſaid unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Siſera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thouſand men after him.

15 And the LORD diſcomfited Siſera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* hoſt with the edge of the ſword, before Barak: ſo that Siſera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on *his* feet.

16 But Barak purſued after the chariots, and after the hoſt, unto Haroſheth of the Gentiles: and all the hoſt of Siſera fell upon the edge of the ſword; *and* there was not a man left.

17 Howbeit Siſera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the houſe of Heber the Kenite.

18 And Jael went out to meet Siſera, and ſaid unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not, and when he had turned in unto her into the tent, ſhe covered him with a mantle.

19 And he ſaid unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirſty: and ſhe opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

20 Again he ſaid unto her, Stand in the

V. 8. *If thou*, &c.] Barak wiſhed to have the benefit of Deborah's preſence, counſel, and prayers, as the judge of Iſrael, and the propheteſs of the Lord: but his faith ſeems to have been weak, and his conduct culpably timorous. It is wonderful that in all theſe events we read nothing of the high prieſt with Urim, and Thummim, of the prieſts with their trumpets, or of the Levites: we muſt conclude that the people greatly diſregarded the divine appointment; and that the prieſts, &c, grievouſly neglected their duty.

V. 9. *Into the hand*, &c.] Deborah probably meant that the honour of the victory would be given to her, inſtead of Barak; but the Spirit of God predicted the death of Siſera by Jael.

V. 11. *From the Kenites*, &c.] The other Kenites dwelt upon the borders of the wilderneſs of Judah; but Heber had removed with his family to the northern part of the land, where he dwelt in tents, and found convenient paſturage for his flocks.

V. 14. *From mount Tabor*, &c.] Barak ſeems to have ſecured his army by the advantage of the ground, until a more favourable opportunity preſented itſelf of attacking the enemy; but Deborah aſſured him, that the very day was come, that "the Lord was gone forth before him," and would deliver Siſera into his hand. Thus encouraged he ventured down with his army of ten thouſand foot ſoldiers into the plain, where the iron chariots had their utmoſt advantage; and ſo the victory became the more illuſtrious.

V. 15. *And the Lord*, &c.] Doubtleſs Barak, and his army diſplayed both conduct, and bravery in this battle; yet the victory is wholly aſcribed to the Lord, who both gave them conduct and courage, and rendered them effectual. It is to be lamented that this pious, and *rational* language of the Scriptures ſhould be ſo much, amongſt Chriſtians, laid aſide, for a phraſeology, which borders upon heatheniſm, or even atheiſm; by aſcribing all events to ſecond cauſes, and excluding the mention of the firſt great Cauſe of all things.

V. 17. *On his feet*, &c.] Siſera quitted his chariot, and fled away on foot, that he might eſcape notice; and for the ſame purpoſe he took refuge in the obſcure tent of Heber: from whoſe peaceable family, not being Iſraelites, he apprehended no danger.

V. 18. *Turn in, my lord*, &c.] Probably Jael really intended kindneſs to Siſera, when ſhe invited him into the tent, and ſhewed him all the hoſpitality, which it afforded; but by a divine impulſe ſhe was afterwards led to conſider him as the determined enemy of the Lord, and his people, and to avail herſelf of that opportunity to deſtroy him.

V. 20.] It is obſervable, that Jael did not promiſe Siſera, that ſhe would deny his being there: ſhe would give him ſhelter, and refreſhment, but not utter a falſehood to oblige him. It is a ſad deviation from ſincerity, and godly

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door of the tent: and it ſhall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and ſay, Is there any man here? that thou ſhalt ſay, No.

21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went ſoftly unto him, and ſmote the nail into his temples, and faſtened it into the ground: (for he was faſt aſleep, and weary:) ſo he died.

22 And behold as Barak purſued Siſera, Jael came out to meet him, and ſaid unto him, Come, and I will ſhew thee the man whom thou ſeekeſt. And when he came into her *tent*, behold Siſera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples.

23 So God ſubdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Iſrael.

24 And the hand of the children of Iſrael proſpered, and prevailed againſt Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had deſtroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

CHAP. V.

Contains an hymn of praiſe for the late victory; in which 1ſt. This deliverance is compared with former mercies, v. 1—5. 2d. The previous ſin, and miſery of the people, are declared, v. 6—8. 3d. Connected with the praiſes of the Lord; commendations are beſtowed on ſome, and cenſures paſſed on others of the Iſraelites, v. 9—23. 4th. Jael's conduct is extolled, v. 24—27. 5th. The diſappointed expectation of Siſera's mother is recorded, v. 28—30. 6th. A prayer is added againſt the enemies, and for the people of God, v. 31.

THEN ſang Deborah and Barak the ſon of Abinoam on that day, ſaying,

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ſimplicity, which is become cuſtomary amongſt us; I mean, the inſtructing and requiring ſervants to prevaricate, (to word it no more harſhly,) in order that their maſters may be preſerved from the inconvenience of unwelcome viſitants. Surely ſome more manly, candid, and Chriſtian method might be ſubſtituted of giving an impertinent intruder to underſtand, that he was not welcome; and to intimate to *friends*, that their company would be more ſeaſonable at another time. I have been informed, that on ſuch occaſions the French ſend word that they *are not viſible*; which is certainly nearer the truth, than to order a ſervant to ſay, that they are "*not at home*." And it ſhould be conſidered, whether they who require their ſervants to diſregard the truth for *their* pleaſure, will not teach them an evil leſſon againſt themſelves, and habituate them to uſe falſehood for their own pleaſure alſo.

V. 21.] When Jael ſaw Siſera faſt aſleep, and was ſatisfied, that ſhe was required to deſtroy him; her faith overcame all reluctancy, and every feminine fear, and with the hammer, and the nail of the tent, which ſhe was accuſtomed to handle, ſhe ſpeedily, and effectually accompliſhed her purpoſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Reformations are often ſpeedily ſtopped, when the reformer is removed; and notwithſtanding the painful effects of ſin, which men repeatedly experience, they will venture upon it, and provoke the Lord to puniſh them with increaſing ſeverity; (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 18. 24. 28:) and tempters commonly prove inſtruments of correction, or vengeance. But the Lord's thoughts, and ways are not as ours: when they, who have moſt frequently, and grievouſly rebelled, begin to pray unto him, he is ready to hear, and help them. Nay he often regards the mere cry of diſtreſs, and relieves men from temporal miſery, ſaying, "ſin no "more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee." He ſelects his inſtruments in that manner, as ſhall moſt mortify the pride, and expoſe the weakneſs of his haughty oppoſers: when repentance, and reformation have prepared the way, the chief difficulty is removed, and deliverance is ſecured to his people: yet unbelief weakens men's hands, and being diſhonourable to God, will eventually diſcredit thoſe, who indulge it. The counſel, and prayers of perſons eminent for faith, and piety, are highly to be valued; but our confiden cemuſt be placed, not in them, but in the preſence, and protection of the Almighty. Whether it pleaſe him to ſave by many, or by few, he hath all hearts in his hands, and ſoon gathers willing, and ſuitable inſtruments for his work: and a variety of incidents, which originate from the voluntary conduct of men acting from ſecular motives, appear by the event to form a part of the ſecret counſel of God, in order to effect his own purpoſes. And as courage, and faith are his gifts, we may expect, that he will ſo diſpenſe them, as ſhall conduce to his own glory; and to ſhew the ſtrongeſt, that they need to be encouraged, and on ſome occaſions are ſurpaſſed, by their weaker brethren. How wretched are they, who have the Lord for their enemy! Their numbers, or power can make no reſiſtance; and in vain ſhall they attempt to flee away and eſcape: ſoon will they be aſhamed of their preſent confidence, and glorying; in vain they may court the friendſhip of the Lord's deſpiſed people; or ſeek refuge in privacy, and obſcurity: ſooner, or later they muſt all periſh, perhaps ſuddenly; and how dreadful to be hurried from the commiſſion of daring crimes into the preſence of their angry Judge! Every natural inclination muſt be counteracted, when the will of God to the contrary is made known; and all our connexions with his enemies muſt be broken off, if we would have the Lord for our God, and his people for our people. It is true, that we are to love, pray for, and be kind to our worſt enemies: yet there are ſome of his foes, to whom we muſt not bid God ſpeed, nor entertain them in our houſes, (2 *John*, v. 10, 11.) However we ſhould to the uttermoſt perſevere in our endeavours to reclaim them; and direct our moſt implacable reſentment againſt our own luſts, aiming at nothing leſs than their utter deſtruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Then ſang Deborah*, &c.] (*Notes, Exod.* c. xv. ver. 1. *Deut.* c. xxxi. v. 19.) By this me-

2 Praiſe ye the LORD for the avenging of Iſrael, when the people willingly offered themſelves.

3 Hear, O ye kings: give hear, O ye princes; I, *even* I will ſing unto the LORD; I will ſing *praiſe* to the LORD God of Iſrael.

4 LORD, when thou wenteſt out of Seir, when thou marchedſt out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds alſo dropped water.

5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Iſrael.

6 In the days of Shamgar the ſon of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways.

7 *The inhabitants of* the villages ceaſed, they ceaſed in Iſrael, until that I Deborah aroſe, that I aroſe a mother in Iſrael.

8 They choſe new gods; then *was* war in the gates: was there a ſhield or ſpear ſeen among forty thouſand in Iſrael?

9 My heart *is* toward the governors of Iſrael, that offered themſelves willingly among the people. Bleſs ye the LORD.

10 Speak, ye that ride on white aſſes, ye that ſit in judgment, and walk by the way.

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thod of celebrating the wonderful works of God, the affections of love, and gratitude would be the more excited and more deeply fixed in the hearts of believers, and the events commemorated would attract more general notice, become more exactly known, and be much longer remembered, than in any proſe narration; and multitudes would become acquainted with them, who had not the opportunity of reading the records of them.—Probably this ſong of praiſe was ſung by Deborah, and Barak, &c, the whole army, and vaſt multitudes of the Iſraelites, as ſoon after the victory, as poſſible.

V. 2. *Praiſe ye the Lord*, &c.] Whatever Deborah, or Barak, or the army had done in obtaining this victory, the Lord muſt have all the praiſe: the will, the power, and the ſucceſs were all from him: and they were eſpecially required to praiſe the Lord for avenging them upon their oppreſſors; as they had brought their miſeries upon them by their own crimes.

V. 3. *O ye kings*, &c.] The kings of the ſurrounding nations were contriving the ruin of the Iſraelites: the kings of the earth have generally in all ages been ſeeking their own glory; or calling upon the people to praiſe their idol gods. This ſong was likely to be heard or read by many of them, through ſucceſſive generations; and the propheteſs therefore calls on them to hear what God had wrought for Iſrael, and againſt their enemies, and to take warning not to meddle to their hurt: ſhe reminds them, that praiſe, and glory belong to the Lord, and not to them, or their idols; and that it would be dangerous for them to rival him, who poureth contempt upon proud, and ambitious princes; and that it was their true wiſdom, honour, and intereſt to ſeek his favour, to become his ſervants, and to uſe their authority in advancing his worſhip, and promoting his glory; as ſhe publicly avowed, that ſhe did, and would do.

V. 4, 5.] (*Note Deut.* c. xxxiii. v. 2. *Pſalm* lxviii. v. 7—9. *Iſaiah*, c. lxiv. v. 1—3. *Hab.* c. iii. v. 3.) The extraordinary diſplays of the divine Majeſty, which their fathers had witneſſed at mount Sinai, are here deſcribed in very poetical language, and compared with the preſent interpoſition of the Lord for Iſrael. The preſence of God had thrown all nature, as it were, into convulſions: the thunderings, and lightnings were attended by impetuous ſhowers of rain, and mount Sinai was in ſuch agitation, that it ſeemed to be melted from before the Lord.

V. 6. *In the days of Shamgar*, &c.] Shamgar probably lived towards the cloſe of the eighty years reſt beforementioned, (c. iii. v. 30.) But the Iſraelites, growing more wicked, found their difficulties increaſe, and nothing was done effectually for their relief, till Jael completed Balak's victory by the ſlaughter of Siſera. This ſeems to be the meaning of the paſſage, which may be rendered "from the days of Shamgar,—to the days of Jael." During this time the land was ſo infeſted by invaders, and haraſſed by oppreſſion, that they could not travel in ſafety on the highways; the villages were deſerted, and the fields left uncultivated, whilſt the inhabitants ſought refuge in the fenced cities, where they were in danger of periſhing by famine.

V. 7. *A mother in Iſrael.*] Deborah employed her authority, for the people's real good, with that tender, and diſintereſted aſſiduity, which a mother ſhews to her beloved children. Kings ſhould be fathers of their people, employing all their time, and abilities to render them happy: Deborah was a mother to Iſrael in reality; and eſpecially as diligently promoting the cauſe of godlineſs, and the ſalvation of their ſouls: (*Iſaiah* c. xlix. v. 23.)

V. 8. *They choſe new gods*, &c.] Joſhua had engaged the people ſolemnly to chooſe the Lord for their God, and to ſerve him only: but they grew weary of his holy ſervice, and "choſe new gods," with new names, and newly come up. But under all theſe images ſatan was virtually worſhipped, who permitted his deluded votaries to indulge their ſenſual luſts, in order to allure them to his ſervice: though they ſoon paid dear for their gratifications; when they were ſubdued, diſarmed and oppreſſed by thoſe enemies, over whom they had formerly triumphed, and whom they ought to have extirpated.

V. 9. *My heart*, &c.] There were governors over every tribe, and in every diſtrict, who ſucceeded in their authority to the captains over thouſands, &c, of whom we have before read: ſome of theſe willingly offered their aſſiſtance to Deborah in promoting reformation, and to Barak in attacking the Canaanites: to theſe the propheteſs ſpake with peculiar affection, and reſpect, and for them ſhe bleſſed the Lord: (2 *Cor.* c. viii. v. 1, 2. 16.)

V. 10. *Speak, ye that ride*, &c It ſeems that riding upon *white* aſſes was a diſtinction appropriated to ma-

11 *They that are delivered* from the noiſe of archers in the places of drawing water; there ſhall they rehearſe the righteous acts of the LORD, *even* the righteous acts *towards the inhabitants* of his villages in Iſrael: then ſhall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a ſong: ariſe, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou ſon of Abinoam.

13 Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

14 Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them againſt Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

15 And the princes of Iſſachar *were* with Deborah; even Iſſachar, and alſo Barak: he was ſent on foot into the valley. For the diviſions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

16 Why abodeſt thou among the ſheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the diviſions of Reuben *there were* great ſearchings of heart.

17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ſhips? Aſher continued on the ſea ſhore, and abode in his breaches.

18 Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

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giſtrates, and to the chief perſons in Iſrael: which was a proof not only of their poverty, but of their remaining ſimplicity, in that they had not yet learned to multiply horſes, and chariots, in conformity to their heathen neighbours. Theſe perſons were here called upon in their ſeveral diſtricts, and whilſt in ſafety they travelled from place to place, to adminiſter juſtice, or upon their own concerns, to teach the people by their example to celebrate the praiſes of the Lord, for his late mercies vouchſafed unto them.

V. 11. *From the noiſe*, &c.] The people could not go out of the gates of the city to draw water, without being expoſed to the arrows of their oppreſſors, who watched that opportunity to murder them; ſo that in ſome caſes they muſt either periſh by thirſt, or ſeek to quench it at the peril of their lives. Thus, in times of perſecution, God's ordinances, thoſe wells of ſalvation, whence are drawn the waters of life, cannot be approached, but at the hazard of the lives of thoſe, who attend upon them: nay at all times ſatan with his temptations will endeavour to deter the believer from drawing near to the throne of grace. "The righteous acts of the Lord" were to be rehearſed by them: his juſtice in the deſtruction of their enemies, and in the miſeries which they had endured for their ſins; and his faithfulneſs in delivering them, and in enabling them to return to their habitations, and employments in peace, and ſafety.

V. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah*, &c.] The governors, and the people having been reminded to praiſe the Lord, Deborah here called upon her own ſoul, or by way of reſponſe inſtructed the people to call upon her, to ſhake off drowſineſs, and be in earneſt in this moſt reaſonable, and delightful employment; "for he that will ſet the hearts "of other men on fire with the love of Chriſt, muſt "himſelf burn with love."—Barak alſo was excited to proſecute his advantage; and as he had deſtroyed the whole army of Siſera in the field of battle; to gather all the unarmed multitude as his captives, to lead them in triumph, and complete their deſtruction.

V. 13. *Him, that remaineth*, &c.] Multitudes of the Iſraelites had been ſlain, and driven into other countries: yet the Lord had made the remnant of them, under the government of a woman, to have dominion over their ſtrongeſt enemies.

V. 14. *Out of Ephraim*, &c.] Probably the Amalekites were coming to the aſſiſtance of Jabin, but ſome of the tribe of Ephraim, oppoſed, and prevailed againſt them: but Benjamin moved firſt, and the Ephraimites aſſiſted them. The governors of Machir, or of Manaſſeh came to the aſſiſtance of Barak, and formed uſeful commanders: and the Zebulunites were ſo in earneſt, that even their ſtudents came to join the army, and to ſerve the common cauſe, as there was occaſion.

V. 15.] Both the princes, and people of Iſſachar attended upon Deborah, either to abide with her, or to accompany Barak, when he was ſent down into the valley with his ſmall number of foot-ſoldiers poorly armed, (v. 8,) to meet the army, and chariots of Siſera. But Reuben kept at a diſtance as diſaffected to the common cauſe; which gave great concern, excited much reſentment, and occaſioned many thoughts in the minds of his brethren, about the cauſe of ſuch an alienation. But he made the care of his flocks the pretence for tarrying at home on this conjuncture.

V. 17. *Gilead*, &c.] The tribe of Dan, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh inhabited mount Gilead: and Machir before-mentioned was that half of Manaſſeh, which dwelt weſt of Jordan. And it is probable that all the Iſraelites, who dwelt eaſt of Jordan abode at home, and refuſed their concurrence. The tribes of Dan, and Aſher did the ſame; the one being occupied in merchandiſe, or fiſhery, and the other, as ſome think, in repairing the breaches, and ſtopping the incurſions, which the ſea had made upon their inheritance.

V. 18. *Zebulun, and Naphtali*, &c.] From theſe two tribes Barak had raiſed his army, and they had boldly ventured their lives, in meeting the enemy, with their iron chariots, in the open field of battle. But ſome of the others were ready to follow the blow, though not preſent in the firſt engagement.

19 The kings came *and* fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo: they took no gain of money.

20 They fought from heaven; the ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera.

21 The river of Kiſhon ſwept them away, that ancient river, the river Kiſhon. O my ſoul, thou haſt trodden down ſtrength.

22 Then were the horſe-hoofs broken by the means of the pranſings, the pranſings of their mighty ones.

23 Curſe ye Meroz, (ſaid the angel of the LORD,) curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; becauſe they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD againſt the mighty.

24 Bleſſed above women ſhall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; bleſſed ſhall ſhe be above women in the tent.

25 He aſked water, *and* ſhe gave *him* milk; ſhe brought forth butter in a lordly diſh.

26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer: and with the hammer ſhe ſmote Siſera; ſhe ſmote off his head, when ſhe had pierced and ſtricken through his temples.

27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

28 The mother of Siſera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot ſo long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

29 Her wiſe ladies anſwered her, yea, ſhe returned anſwer to herſelf,

30 Have they not ſped? have they *not* divided the prey; to every man a damſel *or* two? to Siſera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers

V. 19. *The kings*, &c.] The other kings of Canaan confederated with Jabin out of hatred againſt Iſrael, without receiving any recompenſe for their aſſiſtance.

V. 20. *The ſtars*, &c.] The angels are called "morning ſtars," (*Job*, c. xxxviii. v. 7.) And their aſſiſtance as the Lord's armies may be here meant: or in poetical language a violent tempeſt, raiſed at that time, which greatly facilitated the deſtruction of the Canaanites, may be aſcribed to the influences of the ſtars in their courſes; who, thus without any ſuch miraculous alteration in the appearance of the heavens, as took place in the days of Joſhua, fought effectually for Iſrael againſt their enemies.

V. 21. *The river of Kiſhon*, &c.] The ſtream of this rivulet ſeems to have been ſo ſwelled by the rains, which had fallen at this time, that numbers of the Canaanites attempting to croſs it, were ſwept away by it.

O my ſoul, &c.] Deborah, by exciting Barak, and the Iſraelites againſt their powerful enemies, and by her ſtrong faith, and fervent prayers, had trodden down their ſtrength in the very duſt.

V. 23. *Curſe ye Meroz*, &c.] Meroz was probably ſome city near to the field of battle, and the inhabitants were more inexcuſeable in not affording their aſſiſtance, than thoſe, who lived more remote: and perhaps their refuſal evidently aroſe from a ſecret favour born the Canaanites. The Lord did not want their help againſt the mightieſt of his enemies; but their conduct ſhewed their unbelief, and degeneracy, and expoſed them to this terrible curſe. Deborah did not curſe them out of perſonal reſentment, but the angel of the Lord commanded her to pronounce it upon them, that Angel of the Lord, who was the captain of the Lord's hoſt: (*Joſhua*, c. v. ver. 14.) Perhaps Meroz had before been a flouriſhing city, but in conſequence of this curſe, it decayed, till it became ſo obſcure, that it's ſituation is at preſent unknown. We have no authority, and ought to have no inclination to pronounce curſes upon any perſon: but we cannot remain neuter, in the conteſt betwixt the Lord, and his enemies; and if we do not *actively* endeavour to promote his cauſe in this wicked world, according to our ability, we ſhall with them fall under the curſe, that *he* hath pronounced againſt the workers of iniquity.

V. 24. *Bleſſed*, &c.] The inhabitants of Meroz, though Iſraelites, feared the power, and valued the friendſhip of the Canaanites, more than they dreaded the power, and deſired the favour of God; and therefore were joined with the accurſed Canaanites: Jael, though not an Iſraelite, out of faith, and love to the cauſe of God, preferred the friendſhip of his oppreſſed people to that of their enemies, and was joined with them in the bleſſing, yea had a ſpecial, and ſuperior bleſſing. And indeed "in the tent," ſhe jeoparded her life as much as the ſoldiers did "in "the high places of the field."

V. 26. *She ſmote off his head*, &c.] When ſhe had driven the nail through his head, ſhe probably cut it off with his own ſword. When he felt the anguiſh of the nail penetrating his head, perhaps he ſtruggled to ariſe, but fell down again, and bowed, and died at her feet, finding death, where he had ſought life, and a terrible enemy, where he expected a kind friend.

V. 28. *The mother of Siſera*, &c.] In a mere human compoſition we ſhould ſay, that this was finely imagined; but in an inſpired poem we muſt ſuppoſe that it was actually the caſe. With impatient expectations the mother of Siſera looked for his return, and wondered what ſo long delayed him; not in the leaſt fearing his ſucceſs in ſo unequal a conteſt, as this appeared to her.

V. 29. *Her wiſe ladies*, &c.] This is ſpoken ironically: her ladies, in *their great wiſdom* ſuggeſted that Siſera only waited to divide the immenſe ſpoil, which he had taken; and ſhe *as wiſely* pleaſed her vain mind with the ſoothing imagination.

V. 30. *A damſel or two*, &c.] What a picture doth thisgive of an ungodly and ſenſual heart! How ſhameful are

colours

colours of needle-work on both ſides, *meet* for the necks of *them that take* the ſpoil?

31 So let all thine enemies periſh, O LORD: but *let* them that love him *be* as the ſun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had reſt forty years.

theſe wiſhes of an aged mother for a beloved ſon! That a woman of honour, and virtue, as we ſay, could delight her fancy, with conceiving the Iſraelitiſh virgins divided amongſt the conquerors, as their property, to be expoſed to their unbridled domineering luſt! And that nothing more excellent could be conceived by her trifling mind, than to ſee her ſon, and his attendants, and concubines arrayed in fine garments, wrought by the ſkill, and induſtry of their vanquiſhed enemies! But ſhe is left to enjoy her imaginary triumph, and meet her bitter diſappointment; whilſt the hymn of praiſe concludes with wiſhing ſimilar deſtruction to all the enemies of the Lord, and proſperity to thoſe, who love him: that their characters may be honourable, their endeavours ſucceſsful, their courſe increaſingly uſeful; and their path ſhining more and more; till they reſemble the noon day, when the ſun by his full ſtrength hath diſpelled thoſe miſts, and clouds which his riſing drew up, and which at firſt obſcured his way; but afterwards increaſe his ſplendour.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No time ought to be loſt in returning thanks to the Lord for his mercies; for our praiſes are moſt acceptable, pleaſant, and profitable, when they flow from a full heart, before the tide of affection hath begun to ſubſide. And we ſhould not be backward to celebrate the praiſes of the Lord, and declare our obligations to him, before his moſt determined enemies, or in the preſence of the mightieſt, and haughtieſt of the princes of the earth. Let them be reminded that the Lord is above them, and againſt them, whilſt they ſeek their own glory, and oppoſe his cauſe: let them be warned to rejoice with trembling in their dangerous pre-eminence: let them lower their diadems to the crown of the King of kings: let them be taught to embrace his ſalvation, and become his ſervants, or they will ere long periſh like Jabin, and Siſera; (*Pſalm* lxxxiii. v. 9, 10.) And thoſe princes, who deſire to ſerve the Lord, muſt learn to truſt in him, and not in chariots, and horſes; to uſe their authority in advancing truth, and righteouſneſs, and to account his worſhip to be *their* moſt honourable, and delightſome privilege, and employment.—Every recent mercy calls upon us to renew our gratitude for former benefits. The works of the Lord can only worthily be compared with each other; and all combine in proclaiming, that nothing is too hard for his power, or too large for his love to his people. Our praiſes in proſperity will be heightened, and purified by the remembrance of preceding troubles, and by the humiliation for thoſe ſins, which occaſioned them: for nothing but ſin gives birth to miſery, perſonal, or public, temporal, or eternal. When men rebel againſt the Lord, he withdraws his protection, and ſets his face againſt them: then their feebleſt foes prevail; and his curſe infuſes bitterneſs into all their comforts, nor can any thing but repentance ſtop the ſpeedy progreſs of advancing judgments. But when faithful, and zealous perſons are raiſed up, as magiſtrates, or miniſters, to attempt reformation; when others willingly offer themſelves to concur therein, and when the peeple are ſuitably influenced by ſuch endeavours; the affairs of nations, and churches begin to wear a more favourable aſpect. And when in our perſonal afflictions we are brought to humble ourſelves before God, to repent, to pray, and ſeek forgiveneſs of our ſins, deliverance and comfort are not far off. And happy are they, who are thus "chaſtened of the Lord, that they ſhould not "be condemned with the world:" for the proſperity of the wicked increaſes their pride, inſolence, preſumption, and ſenſuality, till they ſuddenly periſh, and that without remedy. Whilſt we can go abroad, or reſt at home in ſecurity, whilſt we can follow our employments, and attend on the ordinances of God, without any to make us afraid: let us join to our thankſgivings for ſuch diſtinguiſhing mercies, our ſympathiſing prayers, for thoſe, who are groaning under the calamities of war, oppreſſion, and perſecution. But as a craving appetite will urge men to venture their lives for it's gratification, did we aright thirſt for the bleſſings of ſalvation; neither the perſecutor's rage, nor the tempter's aſſaults could keep us from the houſe of God, or the throne of grace. Whilſt we rehearſe the righteous, faithful, and merciful acts of the Lord, from whom cometh every good gift; we ſhould bear true reſpect, and affection, and give deſerved commendation to thoſe, who have been his willing meſſengers of kindneſs to us; and ſhould recompenſe them with our fervent prayers for his bleſſing upon them: and though He needs no human help, yet is he pleaſed to employ, and accept of their ſervices, who in their ſeveral ſtations, improve their talents to advance his cauſe. Nay he *requires* every man ſo to do, and will call thoſe to a ſevere account, who neglect, or ſhift his ſervice. And the higher any man is advanced in his Providence, the more forward ought he to be in promoting the public good, and in ſtirring up others, by his example, influence, and authority to do the ſame: not deeming the high praiſes of God unbecoming the bench, the ſenate, or the throne; or unſeaſonable in the moſt ordinary converſation with ſtrangers, or with the nobles of the earth. And, they, who call others to this heavenly work, ſhould firſt call upon themſelves to be lively, and to abound therein. They, who would do good, muſt ſhake off ſloth, and renounce indulgence; and learn to be active and endure hardſhip: at ſome times they may be called to jeopardy their lives in the high places of the field; at all times to ſacrifice many perſonal intereſts for the public good, and in ſo doing to incur the reproach and cenſure of a miſ-judging world. Moſt men will therefore excuſe themſelves from ſuch ſervices; and whilſt they are averſe to the croſs, and diſaffected to the cauſe of God, they will find apologies enough for their conduct, from the variety of their ſecular engagements, and avocations. But, they, who temporiſe in a matter which admits not of neutrality; and refuſe their active ſupport to the cauſe of God, are numbered amongſt his enemies; and whilſt they grieve, and diſcourage the hearts of others, they bring the heavy wrath of God upon themſelves. Indeed the power, and pre-eminence at preſent ſeem to be on their ſide; and the ſervants of God are poor, deſpiſed, and afflicted: but the tables will ſoon be turned; and the feebleſt believer ſhall tread down the ſtrength of,

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſrael again apoſtatizing, oppreſſed by the Midianites, and reproved by a prophet, v. 1—10. 2d. Gideon appointed by the angel of the Lord to deliver them, his appointment confirmed by a ſign, and his building an altar, v. 11—24. 3d. Commanded to deſtroy the altar of Baal, &c, and to ſacrifice to the Lord; and his obedience, v. 25—27. 4th. The reſentment of his citizens, and his father's plea for him, v. 28—32. 5th. His raiſing troops, and his being encouraged by a two-fold ſign, v. 34—40.

AND the children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian ſeven years.

2 And the hand of Midian prevailed againſt Iſrael: *and* becauſe of the Midianites the children of Iſrael made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and ſtrong holds.

3 And *ſo* it was, when Iſrael had ſown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the eaſt, even they came up againſt them;

4 And they encamped againſt them, and deſtroyed the increaſe of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza; and left no ſuſtenance for Iſrael, neither ſheep, nor ox, nor aſs.

5 For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as graſhoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to deſtroy it.

6 And Iſrael was greatly impoveriſhed becauſe of the Midianites; and the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD.

7 And it came to paſs, when the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD becauſe of the Midianites,

8 That the LORD ſent a prophet unto the children of Iſrael, which ſaid unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the houſe of bondage;

9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppreſſed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land:

10 And I ſaid unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whoſe land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

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and exerciſe dominion over the mightieſt of the wicked. When God ariſes to judgment, and to help all the meek upon earth, and to avenge the cauſe of his people; the whole creation will wage war againſt his enemies: the ſtars in their courſes, the elements melting with fervent heat, and all the angels in heaven ſhall concur in their deſtruction: whilſt all the hoſts of God, ſhall ſing with triumphant acclamations, "So let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord:" and they, who love the Lord, ſhall then ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father. What will then become of the hopes of the ſenſual, the vain, the covetous, and the ambitious? The objects of their nobleſt wiſhes were degrading, and many of their deſires were baſe, and brutiſh: yet will not even theſe wiſhes, and deſires be gratified; and eternal diſappointment, and black deſpair will complete their final miſery. Where will then be their boaſted wiſdom; where their high-ſounding titles, and glittering diſtinctions? All, all vaniſhed, and gone for ever. But the righteous may wait that cloſing ſolemn ſcene with joyful expectation: may conſider death and judgment as the coming of their beloved to complete their felicity: and though willing to wait his time, yet longing to behold his face, they may well ſay, "Why is his chariot ſo long in "coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" But though they meet delays, they ſhall not ſuffer diſappointment; for yet a little ſpace, and he will come, and receive them to his glorious, and eternal reſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *The dens*, &c.] Theſe caverns were well known to the Iſraelites, when this hiſtory was publiſhed; but it was proper that the original, and uſe of them ſhould be remembered; both for their humiliation, and to excite their gratitude. The Midianites and Amalekites came againſt them, rather in the form of free-booters, than as a diſciplined army of troops under experienced commanders: yet the courage of the Iſraelites was ſo ſunk, that they did not dare to make reſiſtance, but daſtardly concealed themſelves under ground from their ravages: (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 17. 36, 37.)

V. 4. *Unto Gaza*, &c.] The country of Midian was beyond the moſt eaſtern borders of the land, and Gaza was near the Mediterranean ſea on the weſt. So that they went quite acroſs the country, and occupied, and deſolated the whole.

V. 7. *When they cried*, &c.] After having long ſmarted under their affliction, they cried unto the Lord to deliver them from it; but do not ſeem to have been humbled for their ſins, (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 15, 16.) Therefore he ſent a prophet to call them to repentance, before he raiſed up a judge to deliver them from their enemies. The meſſage of this prophet was very plain, and convincing, and probably he delivered it from city to city throughout the land; and it ſeems to have had conſiderable effect, as it prepared the way for their deliverance.

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and ſat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joaſh the Abiezrite: and his ſon Gideon threſhed wheat by the wine-preſs, to hide *it* from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and ſaid unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon ſaid unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, ſaying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forſaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and ſaid, Go in this thy might, and thou ſhalt ſave Iſrael from the hand of the Midianites: have not I ſent thee?

15 And he ſaid unto him, O my Lord, wherewith ſhall I ſave Iſrael? behold, my family *is* poor in Manaſſeh, and I *am* the leaſt in my father's houſe.

16 And the LORD ſaid unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou ſhalt ſmite the Midianites as one man.

17 And he ſaid unto him, if now I have found grace in thy ſight, then ſhew me a ſign that thou talkeſt with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my preſent, and ſet *it* before thee. And he ſaid, I will tarry until thou come again.

19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the fleſh he put in a baſket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out unto him under the oak, and preſented *it*.

20 And the angel of God ſaid unto him, Take the fleſh and the unleavened cakes, and lay *them* upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did ſo.

V. 11. *By the wine-preſs, to hide*, &c.] The Iſraelites contrived to conceal in this manner a ſcanty portion of their harveſt, juſt ſufficient to keep them from ſtarving. In the wine-preſs Gideon beat out the wheat with a ſtaff, unſuſpected: for either the vintage was not ripe; or they had lately had no uſe for their wine-preſſes, being glad to get a morſel of bread, and to do without wine.

V. 12. *Thou mighty man of valour.*] Perhaps Gideon, at his work, was meditating on the miſerable eſtate of Iſrael, and conceiving bold deſigns againſt their invaders, which yet he ſaw no poſſibility of accompliſhing.

V. 13. *If the Lord*, &c.] The angel had ſaid "The "Lord is with *thee:*" but Gideon's mind was occupied about his people, and he therefore anſwered, "If the Lord "be with *us*," &c, as not conceiving that the Lord could be with *him*, when there was no evidence of his ſpecial preſence with Iſrael. But though he formed a proper judgment, when he concluded that they could not have been ſo diſtreſſed, if the almighty Lord, who had brought them out of Egypt, had not forſaken them: yet he did not ſuitably advert to thoſe crimes, which had provoked him ſo to do.

V. 14. *And the Lord looked*, &c.] We here learn who this angel was: even the Lord, Jehovah, the only begotten ſon of God, who hath in all ages declared the Father to mankind. Theſe repeated evidences continually remind the attentive reader, that the Scriptures are calculated to lead us to conceive of the one living, and true God, as ſubſiſting in diſtinct perſons. We read of Jehovah, who ſent, and of Jehovah, who was ſent, and though *in that reſpect* he appeared "in the form of a ſervant," yet he ſpake as Lord of all. And we ſhall hereafter perceive this to be equally the caſe in reſpect of the Holy Ghoſt. The Lord looked upon Gideon with ſome peculiar expreſſion of Majeſty, or of favour, giving energy to his words.

In this thy might, and, &c.] Either to execute the bold deſigns, which he was revolving in his mind: or rather in that ſtrength of faith which he then poſſeſſed. If he believed that nothing was wanting to deliver them from the Midianites, but the preſence of God, who redeemed them from Egypt, let him go in this confidence, and he ſhall find that ſame power exerted to render him ſucceſsful: "Have "not I ſent thee," ſaith the divine ſpeaker.

V. 15. *My family is poor*, &c.] Manaſſeh was not one of the leading tribes in Iſrael: the thouſand, (for ſo the word ſignifies,) to which his fathers houſe belonged, was poor in that tribe; and he was the meaneſt perſon in the family in his own humble opinion of himſelf, and unfit to undertake ſuch a ſervice, though he could not help wiſhing for Iſrael's deliverance.

V. 16. *As one man.*] With great facility, and to their entire deſtruction.

V. 17. *That thou talkeſt*, &c.] Gideon ſeems to have deſired to be ſatisfied, that the perſon, that ſpake to him, was the ſame, who at the buſh commiſſioned Moſes to deliver Iſrael out of Egypt, and who had given him ſenſible tokens of his divine power, and authority.

V. 19. *A kid*, &c.] (*See Gen.* c. xviii. v. 5.) This preparation would ſerve either for an hoſpitable meal, or for a ſacred oblation: the quantity was *vaſtly* more than was neceſſary for one perſon at one time: and it ſhews that even in his poverty, Gideon was ready to uſe hoſpitality without grudging, according to the cuſtom of thoſe times.

V. 20, 21.] This command ſeems to have been intended as a trial of his faith and obedience; wherein the Lord gave him the ſign, which he required: with the ſtaff which he held in his hand, he touched the fleſh, &c, and by fire miraculouſly kindled the whole was conſumed, as a ſacrifice, and not as an entertainment; for he was God, and not man.

21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the ſtaff that *was* in his hand, and touched the fleſh, and the unleavened cakes; and there roſe up fire out of the rock, and conſumed the fleſh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his ſight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon ſaid, Alas, O Lord God! for becauſe I have ſeen an angel of the LORD face to face.

23 And the LORD ſaid unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou ſhalt not die.

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-ſhalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

25 And it came to paſs the ſame night, that the LORD ſaid unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the ſecond bullock of ſeven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it;

26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the ſecond bullock, and offer a burnt-ſacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou ſhalt cut down.

27 Then Gideon took ten men of his ſervants, and did as the LORD had ſaid unto him: and *ſo* it was, becauſe he feared his father's houſhold, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night.

28 And when the men of the city aroſe early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was caſt down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the ſecond bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built.

29 And they ſaid one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and aſked, they ſaid, Gideon the ſon of Joaſh hath done this thing.

30 Then the men of the city ſaid unto Joaſh, Bring out thy ſon, that he may die: becauſe he hath caſt down the altar of Baal, and becauſe he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it.

31 And Joaſh ſaid unto all that ſtood againſt him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye ſave him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilſt *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himſelf, becauſe *one* hath caſt down his altar.

32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, ſaying, Let Baal plead againſt him, becauſe he hath thrown down his altar.

V. 22. *I have ſeen*, &c.] The ſight of a created angel, though it might have ſurpriſed, would not have thus terrified Gideon: but it was a current opinion, that the viſion of the divine glory was fatal: and, except as ſeen in Jeſus Chriſt, it would be ſo: (*Exod.* c. xxxiii. v. 20—22.)

V. 23. *The Lord ſaid*, &c.] Either at a ſecond appearance, or by an audible voice, or in a viſion, as afterwards, (v. 25.)

V. 24. *An altar*, &c.] Not for ſacrifice, but for a memorial of the Lord's pacific appearance to him. Jehovah-Shallom ſignifies "the Lord our peace," or the Lord ſhall ſend peace.

V. 25. *Even the ſecond*, &c.] It is controverted whether Gideon was to ſacrifice one bullock, or two; and, what is meant by "the ſecond bullock." But he underſtood the Lord's meaning very well, and it doth not much concern us. It is alſo generally ſuppoſed, that this bullock, or theſe bullocks were intended as a ſacrifice to Baal, and fattened for that purpoſe. Before he offered them, he was commanded to break down the altar of Baal, "which his father "had;" and whereupon he and his citizens joined in ſacrifice. So devoted were they to their idolatry, even when ſeverely ſmarting for it! We may ſuppoſe that Gideon had expreſſed his diſapprobation of their conduct, but in vain; they had not regarded the prophet of the Lord, and would not regard him. By throwing down this altar, and cutting down the grove, which ſhaded it, he declared open war againſt Iſrael's idolatry, before he attacked their enemies. After this he was ordered to build an altar, and to offer ſacrifices to Jehovah; intimating that their ſin could only be pardoned through that atonement, which was therein typified. And though he was not a prieſt, or Levite, and ordinarily they were confined to the altar at Shiloh; yet the Lord would diſpenſe with his own *ritual* inſtitutions, and accept his ſacrifice.

V. 27. *Becauſe he feared*, &c.] His father's large family, was grievouſly infected with this idolatry; which the more magnifies the mercy of God in preſerving Gideon, and in ſelecting him to be Iſrael's deliverer. But there were ſome even there, who were otherwiſe diſpoſed, and willing to help in this perilous attempt.

V. 28, 29.] When they aroſe betimes, perhaps to pay their morning devotions to Baal, and ſaw what was done, they ſuſpected Gideon, and were ſpeedily aſſured that he had done it; and nothing but his blood could ſatisfy the perſecuting rage of theſe infatuated idolaters!

V. 31. *Will ye plead*, &c.] Joaſh, though a ring-leader in their idolatry, was unwilling to have his ſon puniſhed; and probably was convinced of the ſin, and folly of worſhipping Baal. However he concluded, that if Baal were a God, he could avenge his own cauſe; and if not, they who pleaded for him deſerved to die. On this occaſion he

33 Then

33 Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the eaſt, were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

35 And he ſent Meſſengers throughout all Manaſſeh; who alſo was gathered after him: and he ſent meſſengers unto Aſher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gideon ſaid unto God, If thou wilt ſave Iſrael by mine hand, as thou haſt ſaid,

37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beſide*, then ſhall I know that thou wilt ſave Iſrael by mine hand, as thou haſt ſaid.

38 And it was ſo: for he roſe up early on the morrow, and thruſt the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowlfull of water.

39 And Gideon ſaid unto God, Let not thine anger be hot againſt me, and I will ſpeak but this once: Let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

40 And God did ſo that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

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gave his ſon a new name, and called him Jerubbaal; as if he had ſaid, let Baal plead againſt him, if he be able; and by this name Gideon bade defiance to the power of their idol, and proteſted againſt his ſtupid worſhippers. He was alſo called Jerub-beſheth, which ſignifies, "let ſhame "plead;" for what the people called Baal, or their Lord, was indeed their ſhame.

V. 34. *Abiezer*, &c.] It ſeems a very great reformation took place on this occaſion; for that city furniſhed him his firſt attendants, when he prepared to attack the Midianites.

V. 36—40.] The view of the vaſt multitudes of the enemy diſcouraged Gideon; who for the confirmation of his own faith, and that of his troops, deſired this miraculous ſign of the Lord's preſence, as the ſeal of his commiſſion. But as it is the nature of wool to ſuck in the moiſture, when there is any in the air; ſo the firſt token did not quite ſatisfy him: and, yet conſcious of his unbelief, he aſked the reverſal of the ſign with an humble deprecation of the Lord's diſpleaſure; and he obtained it. According to this miracle, the nation of Iſrael was moiſtened by the dew of heavenly bleſſings, when the whole earth beſide remained dry: and now that the nations of the earth enjoy the bleſſings of redemption, the Jews remain like the dry fleece.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The tendency of fallen nature to apoſtacy from God, is ſo ſtrong, that no means can of themſelves prevent it's effect; and when divine grace is withheld, man as naturally does evil, as the ſtone gravitates to the centre. Theſe Scriptures were intended to teach us this humiliating truth, that all the glory of every thing good in man may be given to the Lord; that the ſinner may depend entirely upon his gracious aſſiſtance; that we may all be reminded, that in our fleſh dwelleth no good thing; and that miniſters may remember, that without the ſpecial bleſſing of God, even Paul might plant in vain. The Lord hath ſo conſtituted the world, that fear, ſhame, and miſery are the natural effects of ſin, and will infallibly follow the commiſſion of it; though impenitent ſinners endeavour to ſhift them off, and *for a time* ſucceed. But conſcious guilt appalls the heart, and reduces men to the moſt degrading expedients for ſelf-preſervation. And when plenty is abuſed in ſenſuality, it is a merciful chaſtiſement to be pinched with want, and reminded that we have provoked the Lord. The preſſure of affliction will extort even from nature a cry of diſtreſs, and a prayer for relief. If the Lord regard theſe prayers, he will convince ſuch perſons of their ſinfulneſs, and lead them to repentance: and no relief from ſuffering will eventually be a mercy, which is not accompanied by deliverance from the guilt, and power of ſin. When miniſters have declared the perfections, and authority of God; the relations in which we ſtand to him, and the favours which each hath received from him; the reaſonableneſs of his precepts, the advantages of his ſervice, the evil of ſin, and the number of men's tranſgreſſions: the matter muſt be left to conſcience, which, when allowed to ſpeak, will teſtify their need of repentance and forgiveneſs, and that they ought to turn from all their wicked ways, and obey the voice of God: yet many feel that theſe things are right, who yet proceed in their ungodlineſs. But the Lord will reſerve to himſelf a remnant in the worſt of times, to whom he will manifeſt his gracious preſence; and they are never more likely to be thus favoured, that when ſtruggling with outward difficulties, employed in honeſt labour, and meditating upon heavenly things. Talents ſuited for peculiar ſervices, for a time may be buried in obſcurity, but in due ſeaſon the Lord will take the candle from under the buſhel, and place it upon a candleſtick, to give light to all around. That time muſt be waited for by thoſe, whoſe hearts glow with deſires of uſefulneſs, which at preſent they have no opportunity of executing. We are more diſpoſed to muſe upon our troubles, than upon our tranſgreſſions; and when we do not directly experience the ſame deliverances, which have been afforded to others, we are apt to think that the Lord's hand is ſhortened, or that he hath forgotten to be gracious: not conſidering that he worketh every thing in it's appointed ſeaſon, according to the determinations of his unfathomable wiſdom, and as beſt anſwers the purpoſes of his own glory. But before honour is humility; and the delays, and diſappointments, whereby the Lord humbles thoſe, whom he de-

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. Gideon's army made trial of by divine direction, and reduced to three hundred men, v. 1—8. *2d. Gideon himself encouraged by hearing the dream of a Midianite, v.* 9—15. *3d. The method, in which he assaulted, and routed the enemy, v.* 16—22. *4th. The Israelites intercepting their flight, and destroying them, with two of their princes, v.* 23—25.

THEN Jerubbaal, (who *is* Gideon,) and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart early from mount Gilead: and there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

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lighteth to honour, often discourage their hearts, and induce distrust, and reluctancy to duty; so imperfect, and defiled with sin are our best graces! yet he generally employs those, who are most sensible of their own unworthiness, and insufficiency; teaching them to exercise the courage of faith, and to grow strong, by simply expecting help from God; and graciously assuring them, that he employs them, and will be with them. When the Lord favours his servants with glimpses of his glory, and tastes of his love, they long for the continuance of his gracious presence: and when the sense of his pardoning love hath banished the fear of wrath; they will rise superior to their discouragements, will praise him for his mercies, and be ready to say, "here I am, send "me." (*Isaiah*, c. vi. v. 8;) though the service be dangerous, and difficult, and requires much self-denial. In attempting reformation, (which is the first step towards recovering prosperity,) no man must be known according to the flesh: nay when the commands of God are concerned, even parental authority loses it's obligation; and though the method of procedure should be directed in wisdom, yet we must not be counselled by natural affection, or the fear of man. If we do any thing *effectual* against the cause of Satan, his servants will certainly be enraged, especially they, that are zealous for a false religion: but the Lord hath all hearts in his hands, and can easily intimidate the enemies of his people, or convert them into friends, and helpers: and persecution must always appear unreasonable, and odious to a reflecting mind. Let Baal, if he be a god, plead his own cause: and Jehovah allows not his servants to use such carnal weapons. Wicked men are frequently most furious, when their destruction is just at hand: for when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against him. Yet even they, who have the Spirit of God, and by the trumpet of the gospel call others to the conflict, cannot always keep out disquieting fears, in circumstances of peculiar danger, and difficulty. In this struggle against involuntary unbelief, the Lord himself, the author, and finisher of his people's faith, is their refuge: to him will they make application, and he will help them; and when they are encouraged, they will be enabled to sympathise with, and to strengthen their brethren. Yet the same inward enemy will again and again assail them; and conscious that their fears dishonour the power, faithfulness, and love of God, they will deprecate his displeasure, whilst they beseech him to strengthen their faith; and he will both pardon and condescend to their desires, whilst they endeavour to trust in him, but cannot do the thing, that they would. What cause have we sinners of the Gentiles to bless the Lord, that the dew of heavenly blessings, which was once confined to Israel, now descends upon the inhabitants of the earth, without that limitation! yet still the means of grace are dispensed in different measures according to the purposes of God; and even in the same congregations one man's soul is like Gideon's moistened fleece, another like the dry ground. Let us then continually pray for the divine blessing on the ordinances of God to ourselves, and others: not forgetting the Jewish nation, which hath been so long a dry fleece, whilst the earth around hath engrossed the blessing.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 3. *Whosoever is fearful*, &c.] Gideon either forgot the law, to this purpose, (*Deut.* c. xx. v. 8;) or thought it might be dispensed with on this occasion. But the Lord saw the pride of the people's hearts, and their disposition to overlook him in the whole transaction: many of them were through unbelief afraid of the enemy; yet if they had prevailed, they would have ascribed the victory to their own courage, and conduct. The people had flocked together at first very readily, but the sight of the innumerable host of the Midianites made such of them tremble, as were destitute of faith, and disquieted by a guilty conscience. They were bid to depart from

6 And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the reſt of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I ſave you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he ſent all *the reſt of* Iſrael every man unto his tent, and retained thoſe three hundred men. And the hoſt of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

9 And it came to paſs the ſame night, that the LORD ſaid unto him, Ariſe, get thee down unto the hoſt; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy ſervant down to the hoſt.

11 And thou ſhalt hear what they ſay, and afterward ſhall thine hands be ſtrengthened to go down unto the hoſt. Then went he down with Phurah his ſervant unto the outſide of the armed men that *were* in the hoſt.

12 And the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children of the eaſt, lay along in the valley like graſhoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the ſand by the ſea-ſide for multitude.

13 And when Gideon was come, behold, *there was* a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and ſaid, Behold, I dreamed a dream; and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the hoſt of Midian, and came unto a tent, and ſmote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.

14 And his fellow anſwered and ſaid, This *is* nothing elſe ſave the ſword of Gideon the ſon of Joaſh, a man of Iſrael: *for* into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the hoſt.

15 And it was *ſo*, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worſhipped, and returned into the hoſt of Iſrael, and ſaid, Ariſe, for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the hoſt of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17 And he ſaid unto them, Look on me, and do likewiſe: and, behold, when I come to the outſide of the camp, it ſhall be, *that* as I do, ſo ſhall ye do.

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets alſo on every ſide of all the camp, and ſay, *The ſword* of the LORD, and of Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outſide of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly ſet the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.

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mount Gilead, ſome mountain of that name weſt of Jordan, of leſs note than mount Gilead, which lay eaſt of that river.

V. 6. *Of them that lapped*, &c.] Perhaps the army was led to the water, under the idea, that they were going directly to attack the enemy. It ſeems to have been cuſtomary for them to drink as the cattle do, by putting their mouths down to the water, and drawing it in: but they, who only took a little into their hands, and ſucked it up, (as dogs are remarked to lap a little water haſtily,) might be ſuppoſed to be leſs enſlaved to their appetite, more able to endure hardſhip, and more eager to engage.

V. 8. *Victuals*, &c.] This ſmall company ſeems to have retained nothing, but preſent neceſſary proviſions, and perhaps all the trumpets, which belonged to the whole army, without any other arms.

V. 13, 14.] This dream ſeemed to have little coherency, or ſignificancy in it: but the interpretation given of it, evidently proved the whole to be from the Lord; and at the ſame time diſcovered that the name of Gideon had filled the hearts of the Midianites with terror. The ſmall unarmed company which Gideon headed, had the Midianites known about them, would have appeared as contemptible to them as the barley cake, and no more likely to deſtroy their army, than that would have been to overturn a tent. Gideon therefore took this as a ſure pledge of ſucceſs, and without delay worſhipped, and praiſed God for it, and returned with confidence to his three hundred men, who were "the hoſt of the Lord," by whom he intended to deliver Iſrael.

V. 16—22.] This ſmall number of men thus divided would be able to encompaſs the whole camp of the Midianites: concealing their lamps in their pitchers, they would paſs unobſerved to their appointed ſtations: then in the dead of the night, when moſt of the enemy were faſt aſleep, all at once breaking their pitchers one againſt another, with as much noiſe as they could, and blowing the trumpets, and ſhouting "The ſword of the Lord, and of

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal:* and they cried, The ſword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

21 And they ſtood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the hoſt ran, and cried, and fled.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD ſet every man's ſword againſt his fellow, even throughout all the hoſt: and the hoſt fled to Beth-ſhittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abel-meholah unto Tabbath.

23 And the men of Iſrael gathered themſelves together out of Naphtali, and out of Aſher, and out of all Manaſſeh, and purſued after the Midianites.

24 And Gideon ſent meſſengers throughout all mount Ephraim, ſaying, Come down againſt the Midianites and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah, and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themſelves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.

25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they ſlew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they ſlew at the wine-preſs of Zeeb, and purſued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other ſide Jordan.

" Gideon," they would occaſion a great alarm: and when their enemies were awaked out of ſleep, and heard the continued ſound of ſo many trumpets, and ſaw the whole camp ſurrounded with lights, they would in their confuſion naturally conclude themſelves ſurpriſed by a large army: and perceiving the lamps and trumpeters ſtill keeping their ſtations, they would be led to ſuſpect that the enemy was even now in the camp; and thus in the dark would become jealous of one another: and when ſome had by miſtake been ſlain by their comrades, the diſtraction, and terror, and ſuſpicion would become more general; until every one was engaged in battle with his fellow ſoldier. Thus we may eaſily conceive of the ſucceſs of this ſtratagem: but the power of God had previouſly prepared the diſmayed hearts of the Midianites to receive ſuch an impreſſion, and he ſet every man's ſword againſt his fellow: nay the obedience of faith alone could have induced ſo defenceleſs a company, to venture upon ſuch an expedient.

24. *Gideon ſent*, &c.] As ſoon as the ſtratagem began to take effect, he diſpatched meſſengers to the neighbouring places; from whence thoſe, who had been diſmiſſed contrary to their inclinations, and many others were ſoon collected; and whilſt ſome occupied the fords of Jordan to prevent the eſcape of any Midianites, others purſued, and ſlew the fugitives.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Activity, and prudence very properly accompany dependance upon God for aſſiſtance, and ſucceſs in our lawful undertakings: but the Lord ſeeth not, as man ſeeth; and being acquainted with the ſecrets of every heart, he varieth his conduct with a wiſe regard to a multitude of circumſtances, which are imperceptible by all others. And when he ſees men inclined to overlook him, and through unbelief to ſhrink from perilous ſervices, or through pride " to vaunt themſelves againſt him," he will ſet them aſide, and do his work by other inſtruments. Many profeſs themſelves followers of Chriſt, helpers to his ſervants, and prepared to fight under his banner, whilſt perſecution, and tribulation are at a diſtance: but without true faith, and a good conſcience, the heart will fail in the immediate proſpect of danger; and ſome pretence will be found, for deſerting the cauſe, and eſcaping the croſs. But though a religious ſociety may be diminiſhed in numbers, and in external proſperity, by their apoſtacy; yet they will be gainers in purity, and may conſequently expect an increaſing bleſſing from the Lord. Many who have real faith, and grace, are unfit for ſome ſpecial ſervices, and unable to bear ſome peculiar trials, from which therefore the Lord will exempt them; and to which he will appoint thoſe, to whom he hath given ſuperior hardineſs, boldneſs, and firmneſs of ſpirit: and very trivial incidents will ſometimes make diſcovery of men's capacities, and diſpoſitions; and ſhew who are, and who are not to be depended on in arduous undertakings. But whilſt the Lord purſues his purpoſes of diſplaying his own glory, he will try to the uttermoſt the faith and courage of the ſtrongeſt believer: and even when they are acting by his orders, and have the ſecurity of his promiſe to ſupport them, appearances may be ſo very ſtrong againſt them, that they cannot keep out the miſgivings, and ſtruggles of unbelief: this the Lord perceiveth, and in the moſt ſeaſonable hour, by ſome " token for " good," he will make their faith victorious, and eſtabliſh their hearts in confidence. Dreams generally ſavour of men's waking thoughts, deſires, fears, or diſpoſitions, and frequently diſcover the ſin, that dwelleth in us: often may we be humbled on recollecting our ſleeping imaginations, or made thankful that they were not realities; and be reminded to pray againſt terrifying, or polluting dreams. And ſometimes they may afford us a ſalutary hint, which being according to the truth, and precept of God's word, may be made uſeful, without exactly aſcertaining how it was brought to our mind: and if we can get any benefit from the dreams of others, we ſhould readily embrace, and thank the Lord for it. In the diſcovery of the diſpoſition of thoſe, with whom we are concerned, faith may frequently diſcern the ſecret operation of God, and both take encouragement, and point it out to others. The feebleſt, and moſt improbable methods, when appointed of God, and uſed in faith, produce the moſt deciſive conſequences. The light of divine truth, and grace in his miniſters, who are frail, ſinful men, and ſeldom *adorned* with the embelliſhments of worldly wiſdom, large capacities, or great elo-

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. Gideon prudently pacifying the anger of the Ephraimites, v. 1—3. 2d. Pursuing the Midianites, and taking their kings; and chastising the insolence of the men of Succoth, and Penuel, v. 4—17. 3d. Slaying the kings of Midian; refusing the kingly government of Israel, requesting the ear-rings of the slaughtered enemies, and making an ephod, with its evil effects, v. 18—27. 4th. The continuance of Israel's rest, the number of Gideon's children, his death, and Israel's ingratitude to the Lord, and to him, v. 28—35.

AND the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

2 And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *is* not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?

3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him when he had said that.

4 And Gideon came to Jordan *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them.*

5 And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

6 And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?

quence; but are comparable to mean earthen pitchers; (2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 7:) accompanied by the trumpet of the gospel, preached by them in their several stations, is the power of God to the salvation of his people, and to the subversion of the kingdom of sin, and satan. Nor should they shrink from danger, or fear death: the earthen pitcher must be broken, and frequently the light of their testimony, and example shines brightest after their decease; especially when they have been honoured by being called to lay down their lives in so good a cause. That same light, and sound of heavenly truth, which saves the Israel of God, confounds, and dismays his enemies: and if *threatened* vengeance so appals the sinner's alarmed conscience in this world: what will be the effect of the archangel's trumpet, the voice of the Judge, and the shout of the redeemed, at the great day of account? and of that full blaze of light, which will then manifest all hearts, display every character, and shew every impenitent sinner his deserved and inevitable doom? In this world the wicked are often left, under the power of their own delusions, and the fury of their mad passions, to avenge the cause of God upon each other: and a period is approaching when we may expect that the persecuting foes of Christianity will destroy one another, whilst the host of Israel shall look on, and have nothing to do but to blow the gospel trumpet, and read the meaning of such singular events in the light of the Scripture prophecies: and in the world to come the wicked, by mutual enmity, upbraidings, and contempt, will increase their own, and each other's miseries. What then have the people of God to fear but unbelief and sin? What have they to do, but to believe the word of God, to trust his power and promise, to obey his orders, to wait his time, and to help one another, as occasions are afforded, and circumstances require? For they, who are incapable of one service, may be useful in another. Their victory is sure, and will soon be complete, over their most numerous, and powerful opponents.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—3. *The men of Ephraim*, &c.] Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the Ephraimites were perhaps jealous of him for taking the lead in this business. They were probably averse to take any part in the perilous, and arduous attempt of delivering Israel: but it served as a pretence for their unreasonable anger, that they had not been called upon to assist, though Gideon acted expressly by divine command. But with a presence of mind, a prudence, meekness, and modesty, which did honour to his character, he threw a vail over his own atchievements, and spoke well of theirs, and thus prevented the fatal effects of their anger. He represented his own victory by the three hundred men, who were chiefly of Abi-ezer, as inferior to their taking the princes of Midian: though the former might be called the vintage, and the other the gleaning: and intimated, that the whole glory belonged neither to them, nor him, but to the Lord. This seems to be introduced by anticipation; for the Ephraimites did not bring the heads of Oreb, and Zeeb to Gideon, until he had passed over Jordan; (c. vii. v. 25.)

V. 4. *He, and the three hundred*, &c.] Gideon, and his three hundred chosen men, passed over Jordan alone in pursuit of the two kings of Midian, who with fifteen thousand men had got over before the fords were taken: though they were deserted by some, and chided by others, and abused by others of the Israelites; and though the remaining Midianites so far exceeded them in number; yet in the courage, self-denial, and patience of faith, they pursued them, faint, and hungry, as they were, with long watching, fasting, and fatigue.

V. 6. *Are the hands*, &c.] The services of Gideon, and his men were very great, their necessity very urgent, and their request very moderate: the behaviour therefore of the men of Succoth, and Penuel was extremely insolent and base, and proved them disaffected to Israel, and the God of

7 And Gibeon ſaid, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your fleſh with the thorns of the wilderneſs, and with briers.

8 And he went up thence to Penuel, and ſpake unto them likewiſe; and the men of Penuel anſwered him as the men of Succoth had anſwered *him*.

9 And he ſpake alſo unto the men of Penuel, ſaying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hoſts with them, about fifteen thouſand *men*, all that were left of all the hoſts of the children of the eaſt: for there fell an hundred and twenty thouſand men that drew ſword.

11 And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the eaſt of Nobah and Jogbehah, and ſmote the hoſt: for the hoſt was ſecure.

12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he purſued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and diſcomfited all the hoſt.

13 And Gideon the ſon of Joaſh returned from battle before the ſun *was up*,

14 And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he deſcribed unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threeſcore and ſeventeen men.

15 And he came unto the men of Succoth, and ſaid, Behold, Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, ſaying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we ſhould give bread unto thy men *that are* weary?

16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderneſs, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and ſlew the men of the city.

18 Then ſaid he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye ſlew at Tabor? And they anſwered, As thou *art*, ſo *were* they; each one reſembled the children of a king.

19 And he ſaid, They *were* my brethren, *even* the ſons of my mother: *as* the LORD liveth, if ye had ſaved them alive, I would not ſlay you.

20 And he ſaid unto Jether his firſt-born, Up, *and* ſlay them: but the youth drew not his ſword; for he feared, becauſe he *was* yet a youth.

21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna ſaid, Riſe thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, *ſo is* his ſtrength. And Gideon aroſe, and ſlew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camel's necks.

Iſrael. They deſpiſed Gideon's feeble army, depreciated his former ſucceſs, attempted to weaken his confidence of completing the delivery; and would not afford him the leaſt aſſiſtance in his patriotic, and pious undertaking.

V. 7. *I will tear*, &c.] Gideon deferred his indignation; and intimated to them, that if the kings of Midian eſcaped, they might; but if the Lord enabled him to deſtroy them, it would be plain that he had appointed him judge of Iſrael, and in that character he would puniſh their ill behaviour, and teach them better. It is not agreed in what manner he uſed theſe briars and thorns in tearing the fleſh of the men of Succoth; but though he put them to pain, it is not probable that he ſlew them.

V. 9. *This tower.*] They probably boaſted of, and confided in their tower to ſecure them both from the Midianites, and from Gideon: he therefore deſtroyed it; and as ſome at leaſt of the men of Penuel were ſtill more culpable, than thoſe of Succoth, he put them to death, (v. 17.).

V. 14. *He deſcribed*, &c.] By this young man's information Gideon was enabled to diſtinguiſh betwixt the guilty, and the innocent, and ſo to inflict puniſhment upon the offenders only.

V. 18, 19.] In the troubles of Iſrael theſe kings of Midian had ſlain the brethren of Gideon: and therefore he determined on this occaſion to act as the avenger of blood upon them. As they were not of the devoted nations of Canaan, he might otherwiſe have ſpared them, and he declared that he would. It ſeems that Gideon, though little in his own eyes, was a man of a very majeſtic appearance: and that his brethren much reſembled him: and perhaps this excited the jealouſy of the Midianitiſh kings againſt them, who ſlew them for their own ſecurity, though it eventually proved their deſtruction.

V. 20, 21.] Gideon deſired to inure his ſon to execute vengeance on the enemies of God, and Iſrael; but the youth was timorous, and declined the ſervice; and the kings themſelves intreated, that they might be ſlain, (if they muſt die,) by the hand of Gideon; who being in his full ſtrength, and of great reputation, was more fit for ſuch a ſervice; for their death would be both ignominious, and lingering, if afeeble, timid youth were their execu-

22 Then

22 Then the men of Iſrael ſaid unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy ſon, and thy ſon's ſon alſo: for thou haſt delivered us from the hand of Midian.

23 And Gideon ſaid unto them, I will not rule over you, neither ſhall my ſon rule over you: the LORD ſhall rule over you.

24 And Gideon ſaid unto them, I would deſire a requeſt of you, that ye would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey: (for they had golden ear-rings, becauſe they *were* Iſhmaelites.)

25 And they anſwered, We will willingly give *them*. And they ſpread a garment, and did caſt therein every man the ear-rings of his prey.

26 And the weight of the golden ear-rings that he requeſted was a thouſand and ſeven hundred *ſhekels* of gold, beſide ornaments, and and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beſide the chains that *were* about their camel's necks.

27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Iſrael went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a ſnare unto Gideon, and to his houſe.

28 Thus was Midian ſubdued before the children of Iſrael, ſo that they lifted up their heads no more: and the country was in quietneſs forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 And Jerubbaal the ſon of Joaſh went and dwelt in his own houſe.

30 And Gideon had threeſcore and ten ſons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

31 And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, ſhe alſo bare him a ſon, whoſe name he called Abimelech.

32 And Gideon the ſon of Joaſh died in a good old age, and was buried in the ſepulchre of Joaſh his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 And it came to paſs, as ſoon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Iſrael turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.

34 And the children of Iſrael remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every ſide:

35 Neither ſhewed they kindneſs to the houſe of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodneſs which he had ſhewed unto Iſrael.

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tioner. The ornaments from the camels necks, being in the ſhape of the moon, were probably uſed in ſome idolatrous, or ſuperſtitious manner.

V. 22, 23.] Gideon was willing to fight for, adminiſter juſtice to, and reform religion amongſt them; but only as the Lord's deputy, and whilſt he pleaſed. He would not accept of the perpetual government from them, nor the hereditary ſucceſſion to his children; let the Lord the king of Iſrael, appoint whom he pleaſed.

V. 24. *Iſhmaelites.*] (*Note Gen.* c. xxxvii. v. 28.)

V. 27. *An ephod*, &c.] A very rich garment, like that worn by the high prieſt. Whether Gideon formed this at firſt only as a memorial of his victory; or whether he intended to inquire of the Lord by it, (c. xvii. v. 5. c. xviii. v. 5:) It afterwards became an occaſion of idolatrous worſhip. Probably other requiſites were added, and ſo ſacrifices were offered upon the altar before erected, (c. vi. v. 26.) inſtead of that at Shiloh; which gratified the people's humour, and eaſe: and perhaps Gideon and his family were pleaſed with worſhipping at home, inſtead of going to the tabernacle: this became to them at leaſt an inlet to forbidden worſhip; to the people of idolatry. So that after the death of Gideon, they proceeded to renounce Jehovah entirely, and to worſhip Baal as their God, under the name of Baal-berith, or the Lord of the covenant; having generally covenanted to be his people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is one vanity incident to human affairs, that for every right work a man is envied by his neighbour; (*Eccl.* c. iv. v. 4.) They who will not attempt, or venture any thing in the cauſe of God, will be the moſt ready to cenſure, and quarrel with ſuch, as are of a more zealous, and enterprizing ſpirit: the charge of pride, and ambition, will be brought againſt the moſt unexceptionable undertakings; and when cenſure is ſilenced in one reſpect by the event, it will aſſume another form; and they, who were moſt reluctant to difficult ſervices, will be the moſt exaſperated to be excluded from the credit of them. But only by pride cometh ſuch contention; and it is the wiſdom of Chriſtians to turn away wrath by a ſoft anſwer; and their moſt noble victory is the conqueſt of their own ſpirits, (*Prov.* c. xvi. v. 32:) In thoſe things, which pertain to the truth, will, and glory of God, they ſhould be unmoved as the ſturdy oak; but in the little concerns of their own intereſt or reputation, they ſhould reſemble the pliant willow, which yields to every guſt. And if by throwing a ſhade over what the Lord hath done by them, and making honourable mention of what he hath hath done by others, by giving obliging language in return for rough words, and commendations in lieu of bitter chidings, envy may be avoided, anger abated, and contention prevented; the common cauſe will be more advantaged, than by the moſt ſucceſsful controverſy,

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. Abimelech's ſubtlety, cruelty, and ſucceſsful uſurpation, by the help of the men of Shechem, v. 1—6. *2d. Jotham's parable, and denunciation of vengeance on him, and them, v.* 7—21. *3d. Abimelech reigning, until contention, ariſing betwixt him, and the Shechemites, iſſued in their common deſtruction, v.* 22—57.

AND Abimelech the ſon of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the houſe of his mother's father, ſaying,

2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether *is* better for you, either that all the ſons of Jerubbaal, (*which are* threeſcore and ten perſons) reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember alſo that I *am* your bone and your fleſh.

3 And his mother's brethren ſpake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all theſe words: and their hearts inclined to

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which always takes Chriſtians off from their ſpiritual warfare. The active ſervants of God will always meet with more dangerous oppoſition from degenerate profeſſors, than from open enemies: but they muſt not regard the unreaſonable behaviour of thoſe, who are Iſraelites in name, but Midianites in heart, or who vainly wiſh to obſerve a neutrality. Through manifold tribulations, they muſt carry on their warfare, and purſue the enemies of their own ſouls, and of the cauſe of God, though ready to faint through inward conflicts, and outward hardſhips. And they ſhall be enabled thus to perſevere: for the leſs men help, and the more they hinder them, the more effectually will the Lord aſſiſt, and the more remarkably will he proſper them. It behoves magiſtrates to diſtinguiſh betwixt the guilty, and the innocent, and to puniſh thoſe, who injure their brethren; yet with temper, and to teach them, or others to behave better in future: miniſters muſt warn and ſeverely rebuke thoſe, who diſcourage the hearts of their fellow ſervants; in due ſeaſon the Lord himſelf will appear againſt, and execute vengeance upon thoſe, who have oppoſed his people in their obedience to his commands: In the mean time we muſt defer our anger, and go on with our work, not attempting to avenge ourſelves. Whatever earthly object men glory in, it will be torn from them; and ſinners are never ſo expoſed to danger, as when they deem themſelves moſt ſecure: (1 *Theſ.* c. v. v. 3.) Sins long forgotten by man, muſt be accounted for to God; and ſinful methods of ſelf-preſervation will only haſten, and aggravate the tranſgreſſor's deſtruction; eſpecially when innocent blood hath been ſhed. The execution of atrocious criminals, and the ſhedding of the blood of God's enemies, are in many reſpects honourable ſervices; (*Pſalm* c. lxxxiii. v. 11:) yet we may well be thankful, if we are employed in ſaving men's lives, rather than in deſtroying them. What a miſerable conſolation in death is derived from the hope of ſuffering leſs pain, and dying with leſs diſgrace, than ſome others do! yet many are more anxious upon theſe accounts, than concerning the future judgment, and it's eternal conſequences!—No honour is to be ſought, or ſo much as accepted, but that, which cometh from God, and conſiſteth with his ſole authority and glory; nor may we ſeek for our children thoſe things, which we may not deſire for ourſelves. Whatever deputies are employed, and whoever hath the external precedency in God's church; he is the only real Judge, defender, and ruler of his people. How ſoon will thoſe ornaments which feed the luſt of the eye, and form the pride of life; as well as the indulgences of the fleſh, become the ſhame of thoſe, who were fond of them? The characters of mere men have a ſad, and wonderful mixture in them; nor may we follow them, farther than they follow Chriſt: things ſanctioned by venerable names, and clothed with fair pretexts, are often found by the light of God's word to be vile abominations; and are proved by experience to be dangerous, and fatal ſnares, to thoſe eſpecially, who over-venerate their fellow worms. Small deviations from our rule, are a dangerous precedent, and open the way for more flagrant enormities: and even in marriage, when once the original inſtitution is diſregarded, the ſenſual heart of man, like an humoured child, will bear no contradiction, nor be confined by any limitations. But the Lord pardons, and accepts the true believer, notwithſtanding his infirmities, and after an uſeful life brings him to a quiet end: but conſcious of our own ingratitude to God, and obſerving that of mankind in general; we may learn to be patient under the unſuitable returns, that we meet with for our poor ſervices, and to reſolve after the divine example, "not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good."

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *To Abimelech*, &c.] Gideon, and his family had miſled the people, through the ephod at Ophrah: Iſrael had grievouſly offended in joining themſelves to Baal-berith; and the Lord manifeſted his diſpleaſure, not by delivering them up to foreign invaders, but by giving them up to their own vile paſſions. By Abimelech, the ſon of a concubine, Gideon's flouriſhing family was all at once deſtroyed; and after a time Abimelech, and his aſſiſtants in this baſe wickedneſs, executed vengeance on each other. Gideon had refuſed the proffered kingdom for himſelf, and his ſons; yet Abimelech's name, which ſignifies "my father the king," carried royalty in it: the concubines, whoſe children did not inherit, would naturally ſet up an intereſt oppoſite to the reſt of the family: and Abimelech's mother being of Shechem, a principal city of Ephraim, he conceived the idea of obtaining the kingdom, by her means. In order to ſucceed in this ambitious project, he accuſed his brethren, of intending to ſeize upon the government, and poſſeſs it with joint authority; and pleaded that it would be better to be governed by one prince, than ſo many petty tyrants; and that if they, who were ſo nearly related to him, would raiſe him to the throne, he would be peculiarly attentive to their intereſts: and in

follow

follow Abimelech; for they ſaid, He *is* our brother.

4 And they gave him threeſcore and ten *pieces* of ſilver out of the houſe of Baal-berith; wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light perſons, which followed him.

5 And he went unto his father's houſe at Ophrah, and ſlew his brethren, the ſons of Jerubbaal, *being* threeſcore and ten perſons, upon one ſtone: notwithſtanding, yet Jotham the youngeſt ſon of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himſelf.

6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the houſe of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

7 And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and ſtood in the top of mount Gerizzim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

8 The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they ſaid unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.

9 But the olive-tree ſaid unto them, Should I leave my fatneſs, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees:

10 And the trees ſaid to the fig-tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

11 But the fig-tree ſaid unto them, Should I forſake my ſweetneſs, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

12 Then ſaid the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

13 And the vine ſaid unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

14 Then ſaid all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

15 And the bramble ſaid unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then*

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this manner he acquired the government, without either merit, or capacity for ſuch an honour.

V. 4. *Out of the houſe*, &c.] The Iſraelites had preſented this money as an oblation to their new god; and the men of Shechem borrowed it of him to ſupply their upſtart king. It doth not appear of what value theſe pieces of ſilver were; but they ſufficed for Abimelech's preſent purpoſe; and he thus became a penſioner of Baal, and ſeemed to engage to employ his authority to promote his worſhip; as if he was determined to ſhew himſelf as unlike as poſſible to his father, who had deſtroyed the altar of Baal, &c. With this ſupply he hired a ſet of men, fit for any villainy, and with their aſſiſtance barbarouſly murdered all the numerous family of Gideon, except one ſon, who eſcaped him: and by ſuch infamous meaſures, and perſons, was this baſe born, but baſer ſpirited man made king of Iſrael; and it ſeems the whole nation tamely allowed him to poſſeſs the title of their king.

V. 7. *Mount Gerizzim*, &c.] This mountain lay near to Shechem, and from thence Jotham ſpake to the Shechemites, (who are ſuppoſed to have been aſſembled on ſome public occaſion,) that at leaſt many of them would hear him, and report what he ſaid to the reſt; and he ſolemnly called upon them "to hearken to him, that God might "hearken unto them:" for if they did not repent of their ungrateful treatment of his father's family, and deſiſt from their malicious intentions againſt him, the only remaining ſon thereof, they could not expect, that God would hear their cry, when anguiſh, and diſtreſs came upon them.

V. 8—15.] A parable is a deſcriptive picture, which ſhews the ſimilitude of an event, or action, in lively colours; and conveys to the mind, ere it is aware, the perception of ſome important truth, to which it was previouſly inattentive, or againſt which it was prejudiced: thereby thoſe things are placed in their proper light, which before were miſapprehended; and thoſe are made evident, which before ſeemed doubtful: the ſubject is ſtripped of ſuch things, as do not properly belong to it; and the trouble of a long chain of arguments being ſpared, the cauſe is brought to a compendious deciſion; and reaſon, and conſcience are induced to paſs ſentence, before ſelf love is conſulted, and a man is for a moment as it were *impoſed upon*, in *order to his being profitably undeceived*; he is made judge in his own cauſe before he is aware, and decides againſt himſelf, without ever intending it. The truth of a parable lies in the inſtruction contained in it; and the feigned circumſtances being known to be ſuch, are no ways inconſiſtent with veracity, but greatly ſubſerve the cauſe of truth; conveying it in an unſuſpected, and agreeable manner to the mind: and they have been much uſed by wiſe men in all ages, as the moſt advantageous method of teaching mankind the ſalutary leſſons of juſtice, and prudence; and were ſanctioned by the perpetual uſe, which Jeſus Chriſt made of them. In this parable of Jotham, the folly, and ingratitude of the Shechemites, in making the baſeſt of Gideon's ſons their king, and in murdering the others; the preſumption, and arrogance of Abimelech, in pretending to ſuch an honour, and the conſequences of ſo unreaſonable a procedure, are repreſented with great ingenuity, and ſimplicity. The olive-tree, the fig-tree, and the vine had excellency, and uſefulneſs, if the trees had indeed wanted a king: thus Gideon, and his other ſons were worthy of, and entitled to Iſrael's conſideration, if there had been any occaſion for them to ſet a king over them; but they had humbly, and wiſely preferred the comforts, and duties of private life, to the cares, burdens, and perils of the kingdom. But Abimelech, the ſon of a ſlave, and a concubine, a mean, and worthleſs perſon, uſeleſs, and troubleſome as a bramble, had

come *and* put your truſt in my ſhadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

16 Now therefore if ye have done truly and ſincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his houſe, and have done unto him according to the deſerving of his hands:

17 (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;

18 And ye are riſen up againſt my father's houſe this day, and have ſlain his ſons, threeſcore and ten perſons, upon one ſtone, and have made Abimelech, the ſon of his maidſervant, king over the men of Shechem, becauſe he *is* your brother:)

19 If ye then have dealt truly and ſincerely with Jerubbaal and with his houſe this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him alſo rejoice in you;

20 But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the houſe of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the houſe of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

22 When Abimelech had reigned three years over Iſrael,

23 Then God ſent an evil ſpirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherouſly with Abimelech:

24 That the cruelty *done* to the threeſcore and ten ſons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother which ſlew them; and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in the killing of his brethren.

25 And the men of Shechem ſet liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech.

26 And Gaal the ſon of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made merry, and went into the houſe of their god, and did eat and drink, and curſed Abimelech.

28 And Gaal, the ſon of Ebed ſaid, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we ſhould ſerve him? *Is* not *he* the ſon of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; for why ſhould we ſerve him?

29 And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abime-

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by inſinuation induced them to offer him the kingdom, and had without heſitation accepted of it, and fooliſhly promiſed them vaſt advantages from his protection, and terrible conſequences from their offending of him: though indeed he was fit for nothing elſe, but a fire brand, to ſet them all at variance to their common deſtruction; as the bramble being ſet on fire, may communicate the flame to the loftieſt cedars, and conſume them along with itſelf in the common conflagration.—The oil from the olive tree was the chief ingredient of the ointment, wherewith the prieſts were anointed, it was uſed for the lamps in the ſanctuary, and formed a part of the meat-offering; whereby God was honoured: beſides it's uſefulneſs to man. The wine was uſed in drink-offerings, which were acceptable to God, when properly preſented. Theſe uſeful trees better repreſented what a king ought to be, than the ſtately cedars; for piety to God, and uſefulneſs to man, are more eſſential to the character of a good prince, than external pomp, and majeſty.

V. 20. *The houſe of Millo*, &c.] This ſeems to have been the name of their ſenate houſe, or town hall: and by the houſe of Millo are meant, all the chief perſons of Shechem, who had combined to make Abimelech king, (v. 6;) who are alſo intended by the cedars, which the fire from the bramble would devour.

V. 23. *God ſent an evil ſpirit*, &c.] God gave permiſſion to an evil ſpirit to ſow contention betwixt them, by ſtirring up the pride, envy, malice, and other vile paſſions of their hearts, that they might execute his deſerved vengeance upon each other.

V. 25. *Set liers in wait*, &c.] Being enraged againſt Abimelech, who was abſent from the city, and expected back again, they employed ſome aſſaſſins to lay wait for him, and kill him: who miſſing of him robbed the travellers, and thus helped to increaſe the miſery of the people.

V. 26—29. *Gaal, the ſon of Ebed*, &c.] The word Ebed ſignifies a ſlave, and ſuch his father ſeems to have been, and one of the remnant of the Canaanites, who falſely boaſted his deſcent from Hamor, the father of Shechem, from whom the city was called: yet the Iſraelitiſh inhabitants baſely made him the head of their conſpiracy againſt Abimelech. Under this imagined protector they gathered

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lech. And he ſaid to Abimelech, Increaſe thine army, and come out.

30 And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the ſon of Ebed, his anger was kindled.

31 And he ſent meſſengers unto Abimelech privily, ſaying, Behold, Gaal the ſon of Ebed, and his brethren, be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city againſt thee.

32 Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that *is* with thee, and lie in wait in the field:

33 And it ſhall be, *that* in the morning, as ſoon as the ſun is up, thou ſhalt riſe early, and ſet upon the city: and, behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out againſt thee, then mayeſt thou do to them as thou ſhalt find occaſion.

34 And Abimelech roſe up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait againſt Shechem in four companies.

35 And Gaal the ſon of Ebed went out, and ſtood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech roſe up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait.

36 And when Gaal ſaw the people, he ſaid to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the ſhadow of the mountains as *if they were* men.

37 And Gaal ſpake again, and ſaid, See, there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.

38 Then ſaid Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, wherewith thou ſaidſt, Who *is* Abimelech, that we ſhould ſerve him? *Is* not this the people that thou haſt deſpiſed? go out, I pray now, and fight with them.

39 And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

40 And Abimelech chaſed him, and he fled before him; and many were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the entering of the gate.

41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thruſt out Gaal and his brethren, that they ſhould not dwell in Shechem.

42 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech.

43 And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city; and he roſe up againſt them, and ſmote them.

44 And Abimelech, and the company that *was* with him, ruſhed forward, and ſtood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies ran upon all *the people* that *were* in the fields, and ſlew them.

45 And Abimelech fought againſt the city all that day; and he took the city, and ſlew the people that *was* therein, and beat down the city, and ſowed it with ſalt.

46 And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered into an hold of the houſe of the god Berith.

47 And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that *were* with

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in their harveſt, and vintage, and kept a feaſt to the honour of Baal-berith, and in their revellings curſed Abimelech in his name. Had they forſaken their idolatry, when they deſerted the uſurper, it had been well. On this occaſion Gaal, heated perhaps with wine, expreſſed his diſdain that Abimelech ſhould reign over him, and ſo honourable, and ancient a city, as Shechem: in which he reviled him as the ſon of Jerub-baal, who deſtroyed the worſhip of Baal; and it could not therefore be right that Baal's worſhippers ſhould ſubmit to him, but rather that they ſhould avenge Baal's cauſe upon him: he alſo ſpoke ſlightingly of Zebul, who was left governor of the city, and who was hereby much offended: he invited them to reſtore the authority, in his perſon, to the deſcendants of Hamor, promiſed what great things he would do againſt Abimelech; and challenged him, as if he had been preſent, to decide the conteſt by a battle: the expreſſion tranſlated, "would to God," is only an earneſt wiſh that it might be ſo.

V. 36. *Thou ſeeſt*, &c.] Zebul, who had not yet declared againſt Gaal, ſpake this either in deriſion, or to carry on the deception, till Abimelech ſurpriſed them at unawares.

V. 41—45. *Thruſt out Gaal*, &c.] As his conduct, and ſucceſs had not anſwered the people's expectations, they were willing to be rid of him and his company: and on the morrow, they went forth to fight with Abimelech, who by means of Ambuſhments ſmote them, took the city, ſlew the inhabitants, and utterly deſolated the whole.

V. 46—49.] The inhabitants of a part of the city, called the tower of Shechem, took refuge in the temple of Baal-berith, hoping that Abimelech would reſpect the ſacred-

him; and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his ſhoulder, and ſaid unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have ſeen me do, make haſte, *and* do as I *have done*.

49 And all the people likewiſe cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and ſet the hold on fire upon them: ſo that all the men of the tower of Shechem died alſo, about a thouſand men and women.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped againſt Thebez, and took it.

51 But there was a ſtrong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and ſhut *it* to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower.

52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought againſt it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

53 And a certain woman caſt a piece of a millſtone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his ſkull.

54 Then he called haſtily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and ſaid unto him, Draw thy ſword, and ſlay me, that men ſay not of me, A woman ſlew him. And his young man thruſt him through, and he died.

55 And when the men of Iſrael ſaw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.

56 Thus God rendered the wickedneſs of Abimelech which he did unto his father, in ſlaying his ſeventy brethren.

57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curſe of Jotham the ſon of Jerubbaal.

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neſs of the place; but in deep revenge, he contrived to burn the temple, and the whole company of them.

V. 50. *To Thebez*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been a city, which confederated againſt Abimelech, and to which perhaps ſome Shechemites had fled: but this blood-thirſty tyrant, having taken the city, thought to have burned the inhabitants with the tower, as he had done at Shechem; in which he anſwered the character of the bramble, which may ſet fire to that, which is nobler, and better than itſelf: but his meaſure of iniquity was accompliſhed, he had been the executioner of vengeance upon others, and he muſt ſuffer deſerved vengeance himſelf: in his rage therefore coming too near the tower, he was mortally wounded by a piece of millſtone from the hand of a woman; and being acquainted with this circumſtance, in a vain attempt to avoid the diſgrace of ſuch a death, he ordered his armour bearer to ſlay him, who obeyed his command; and the world, and Iſrael were rid of a vile murderer, uſurper, and tyrant, who came in with ſubtlety, ruled in cruelty, and died in infamy. In this whole hiſtory the wickedneſs, and madneſs of man; the degeneracy, and dreadful apoſtacy of Iſrael; the terrible effects of ambition, revenge, and headſtrong luſts; and the wiſdom, and juſtice of God, in over-ruling the whole for the purpoſes of his own glory, are very much illuſtrated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If parents could foreſee what their children would do, and what they would ſuffer, their joy in them would be often turned into grievous lamentations: we may then be thankful, that we cannot ſee into futurity; we are reminded to commit thoſe, whom we moſt love, into the hands of the Lord, and to attend to our preſent duty, caſting our care upon him reſpecting ourſelves, and them; and to be willing to leave this world, when he pleaſes; for if we lived, we might behold ſuch afflictions, as would break our hearts. Above all we ſhould fear, and watch againſt ſin; for our miſconduct may produce the moſt fatal effects upon our families, and upon ſociety, after we are laid in our graves. No judgment is more terrible to individuals, than being given up to their own luſts; and nothing more dreadful to communities, than to be governed by wicked princes. Able, upright men, who know the duty, and difficulty of exalted ſtations, will be diffident of themſelves, and reluctant to quit the ſecurity, ſweetneſs, and uſefulneſs of private life, for the toils, and dangers of pre-eminence. But men of ſordid, and ſelfiſh minds, deſtitute of the fear of God, and benevolence to man, are capable of a vaſt, and daring ambition; can form crafty projects to accompliſh their deſigns; by inſinuation will draw over ſuch perſons to their intereſts, as are of their own temper, and character; and as they heſitate not at the commiſſion of the moſt horrid crimes, they will often for a ſeaſon, ſeem to have been proſpered in their wickedneſs. Slanders, lies, flatteries, promiſes, bribery, perjuries, nay even murders of the moſt atrocious kind, are the weapons, which they uſe, as occaſion requires, and as ambition, or ſuſpicion ſuggeſt. If by any vile means money can be procured, (and ſatan will help out ſuch faithful ſervants in their emergencies;) they will with it hire thoſe, who for a paltry ſum, are ready for any villany; and will wade through rivers of blood, if neceſſary, to authority, and pre-eminence; their neareſt relatives are not ſafe, if they ſtand in their way; the foundations of all government civil, and eccleſiaſtical muſt be ſubverted to make way for them, and diſtractions, and public troubles, are the element, in which they delight. Such Abimelechs every age produces; and it is ſurpriſing how they impoſe upon thouſands to concur in their baſe deſigns. — But when men are avowed infidels, profligates, and debauchees, what can be expected from them, when not reſtrained by human laws? And their wickedneſs is equalled by the folly of thoſe, who, intruſt power into their hands. But by ſuch ſcourges of

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Tola's government, and death, v. 1, 2. 2d. Jair's government, family, and death, v. 3—5. 3d. Israel's apostacy, and misery, v. 6—9. 4th. Their cry to the Lord, his distressing answer, their persevering submission, and reformation; his compassion, and the dawning of their deliverance, v. 10—18.

AND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim.

2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.

4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass-colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead.

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the human race, and such infatuated counsels, the righteous God chastises his offending people, and executes vengeance on his enemies, as he seeth good: and he will preserve, in the most imminent dangers, those, whom he intends to use for the good of others. He seldom proceeds to extremities against wicked men, without giving them warning: and they, who will not hearken to his call to repent; to the voice of the oppressed, who demand justice, or that of the afflicted, who supplicate relief, will one day cry unto the Lord in extreme anguish, and he will not regard them. All the works of the creation, in their several ways honour their Creator, and subserve the comfort, and benefit of man; who is thereby made the more inexcuseable in neglecting and rebelling against his bounteous Benefactor. In departing from God men are necessitated to trust in creatures, which can do no other but disappoint and ruin them: and one man of moderate talents may soon do more mischief, than many very wise, and excellent persons can do good by the most persevering exertions. But though the wicked may flourish for a time, yet they shall be rooted out at the last: in answer to the cries of the oppressed, God will give them up to their own mad passions; their suspicion, envy, malice, and revenge, shall be kindled against each other; and the weapons with which they destroyed those, who obstructed their iniquitous designs, will at length destroy themselves. The history of mankind impartially related would greatly resemble that of this chapter. The records of the most splendid events present to our view a contest for power amongst ambitious men, carried on by treachery, flattery, mutual insult, contempt, revenge, and cruelty; in which multitudes miserably perished, who were no ways concerned in the cause, or the event of the quarrel. Such scenes, though subjects of panegyric, amongst ungodly poets, orators, and historians, are chiefly useful in illustrating the Scripture doctrine of the deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness of the human heart, the force of men's ungovernable lusts, and the effects of satan's influence: that we may see as in a glass what we should be, if left to ourselves, and learn thankfulness for being preserved from such enormities; for an obscure situation, by which we are less exposed to the danger of falling victims to the ambition, and jealousy of others; and for the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—But it is most lamentable, when such outrages are committed by the professors of the gospel, and disgrace the religion of Jesus in the eyes of multitudes, who cannot, or will not distinguish betwixt Christianity, and those persons, who have no more than the name of Christians: wo be to the world because of such offences; and wo be to them, by whom such offences come!—We should further note that boasting issues generally in shame: that dangers, which are despised at a distance, terrify the more when they approach: that the courage, which wine inspires, is of short continuance: that a mean spirit, and a proud heart harbour the most implacable resentments; whilst the truly generous, and humble are slow to anger, and ready to forgive: that every sinful refuge from danger accelerates or ensures destruction: that more ingenuity, and diligence have hitherto been employed in destroying, than in saving men's lives: that men's sins are often punished in kind, and their cruelty is retorted upon themselves, and by the meanest, and least dreaded instruments: and that the most successful wickedness speedily issues in lasting misery, and disgrace. Vain and foolish is the concern, and worthless are the expedients of dying sinners to preserve their reputation from dishonour, when everlasting contempt, as well as misery, are inevitably reserved for them in a future state. And God will record their crimes, and punishment in this world, notwithstanding all their endeavours to the contrary, as far as is necessary for the instruction of others, and for his own glory: and how can they expect fidelity, or mercy from men, who have been traitors to God, and cruel deceivers of their brethren? But how strong must be man's propensity to wickedness, when such general, and horrible idolatry, and unrighteousness prevailed even in Israel, after all the Lord had done for them, and notwithstanding all the advantages, which they enjoyed. Lord thou hast given us thy word of truth, and righteousness, O pour out upon us thy Spirit of purity, peace, and love, and write thy holy law in our hearts we beseech thee; else all our outward mercies will but enhance our guilt, and increase our condemnation!

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1. *After Abimelech*, &c.] After the death of this usurper, the Lord raised up Tola, to judge Israel. We read not that he waged any war: but he restored peace, and the regular administration of justice, after the late distractions; and he reformed the state of religion amongst them; and was thus as great a blessing, as those judges, who performed more memorable exploits. His name signifies a worm, and he was no worse fitted for being the Lord's instrument for good to his people, if his opinion of himself accorded to so humble a name. Though of the tribe of Issachar, he came to live in mount Ephraim, that he might be in the centre of Israel, and near the tabernacle.

V. 3. *Jair*, &c.] He was a descendant of Jair of

5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

6 And the children of Iſrael did evil again in the ſight of the LORD, and ſerved Baalim, and Aſhtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philiſtines, and forſook the LORD, and ſerved not him.

7 And the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he ſold them into the hands of the Philiſtines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.

8 And that year they vexed and oppreſſed the children of Iſrael: eighteen years, all the children of Iſrael that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead.

9 Moreover the children of Ammon paſſed over Jordan to fight alſo againſt Judah, and againſt Benjamin, and againſt the houſe of of Ephraim; ſo that Iſrael was ſore diſtreſſed.

10 And the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD, ſaying, We have ſinned againſt thee, both becauſe we have forſaken our God, and alſo ſerved Baalim.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, *Did* not *I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philiſtines?

12 The Zidonians alſo, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did oppreſs you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.

13 Yet ye have forſaken me, and ſerved other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have choſen: let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

15 And the children of Iſrael ſaid unto the LORD, We have ſinned, do thou unto us whatſoever ſeemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

16 And they put away the ſtrange gods from among them, and ſerved the LORD: and his ſoul was grieved for the miſery of Iſrael.

17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead: and the children of Iſrael aſſembled themſelves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.

18 And the people *and* princes of Gilead ſaid one to another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight againſt the children of Ammon? he ſhall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

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whom we have read before, and his numerous ſons inherited ſome of the cities, which then fell to his lot (*Num.* c. xxxii. v. 40, 41;) and aſſiſted him as magiſtrates, riding from place to place, to adminiſter juſtice. We may reckon ſome of theſe years as the beſt times of Iſrael under their judges. For did princes rule over their own people in equity, and the fear of God, without moleſting other nations; and did the people live under them in godlineſs, and honeſty, hiſtorians would have but little to record. Yet we muſt take the eighteen years of Iſrael's apoſtacy from the latter part of Jair's government; during which the people ſeem gradually to have corrupted themſelves, and fallen under oppreſſion; and when Jair could not reſtrain them from idolatry, he was no no longer able to defend them from their enemies.

V. 6—9.] The Iſraelites having caſt off the worſhip of Jehovah, and multiplied their idols, were delivered into the hands of the Philiſtines on the weſt, and the Ammonites on the eaſt; who betwixt them cruſhed the people for eighteen years, but moſt terribly towards the cloſe of them.

V. 13. *Wherefore*, &c.] This is ſpoken after the manner of man, and ſhews their deſervings, the demands of God's juſtice, and the conſequence of impenitence: but ſuch threatenings always imply a reſerve of mercy for the penitent.

V. 15. *Do thou*, &c.] The foregoing meſſage was ſent by a prophet, or was delivered by the High Prieſt, when the congregation were aſſembled before the Lord: but the people with one conſent ſubmitted themſelves to the juſtice of God, yet hoping in his mercy; they left themſelves in his hands, craved deliverance from their enemies, and were the more earneſt in reformation. (2 *Sam.* c. xxiv. v. 14.)

V. 16. *His ſoul was*, &c.] Compaſſion as effectually moved the Lord to relieve his oppreſſed people; as a man is urged to aſſiſt a wretched fellow-creature, when he cannot otherwiſe help ſharing his diſtreſs: or as a father is diſpoſed to aſſiſt his ſuffering child.

V. 18. *What man*, &c.] The Lord did not as uſual, on this occaſion, expreſsly appoint them a deliverer; but he ſecretly directed, and openly confirmed their choice of one for themſelves.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The removal of deſperate ſinners by a righteous God often makes way for reformation, and public tranquillity, and proves a great mercy to thoſe, who ſurvive. Man's carnal heart is prone to prefer the bondage of ſin, and ſatan, to the ſervice of God: but their preſent indulgence enſures future miſery; for every expectation of advantage from ſin, the world, and the friendſhip of wicked men,

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. Some account of Jephthah, his election to be commander againſt the Ammonites, and his acceptance of that office, v. 1—11. *2d. His embaſſies to the king of Ammon about peace, v.* 12—28. *3d. His raſh vow, v.* 29—31. *4th. His ſucceſs againſt the Ammonites, v.* 32, 33. *5th. Met by his only daughter, his diſtreſs, her ſubmiſſion, and his performance of his vow, v.* 34—40.

NOW Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he *was* the ſon of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

2 And Gilead's wife bare him ſons; and his wife's ſons grew up, and they thruſt out Jephthah, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt not inherit in our father's houſe; for thou *art* the ſon of a ſtrange woman.

3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

4 And it came to paſs in proceſs of time, that the children of Ammon made war againſt Iſrael.

5 And it was ſo, that when the children of Ammon made war againſt Iſrael, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:

6 And they ſaid unto Jephthah, Come and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.

7 And Jephthah ſaid unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's houſe? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in diſtreſs?

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will enſure a diſtreſſing diſappointment. God is able to multiply men's puniſhments, according to the number of their iniquities, and idols. But there is hope, when, under temporal afflictions, ſinners cry unto the Lord for help, and lament their ungodlineſs, as well as their more ſcandalous tranſgreſſions. Yet the Lord might juſtly leave thoſe, who have forſaken him, to their wretched choice; he might upbraid them with former mercies, and their baſe returns; he might ſend them to their beloved idols, and luſts; he might mock at their calamity, and abſolutely refuſe to help them. This will be the deſperate condition of the wicked in another world; but here mercy can never be ſought in vain: yet, for the deeper humiliation of thoſe, who are but ſuperficially convinced; and to quicken thoſe, who are not duly in earneſt; the Lord will *ſeem* to ſhut up his loving kindneſs in diſpleaſure; he will upbraid them with their former ſins, and purſue them with his awful threatenings, and almoſt bring to conclude that their caſe is deſperate. Nevertheleſs he will keep them from deſperation: and when their prayers are rendered more fervent, their confeſſions more ingenuous, their ſelf-examination more diligent, their dependance more entire on divine mercy, and their forſaking of ſin more unreſerved, we may be ſure, that comfort, and deliverance are at hand. (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 18—20.) Let then the trembling ſinner, and the almoſt deſpairing backſlider ceaſe from inquiring about God's ſecret purpoſes, or expecting to extract hope from former experiences: let them not indulge deſpondency, or yield to heartleſs indolence: let them caſt themſelves upon the mercy of God our Saviour, patiently ſubmit to his ſevereſt chaſtiſement, humble themſelves more, and more under his hand; ſeek deliverance upon any terms from the powers of darkneſs; ſeparate themſelves as much as poſſible from ſin, and all occaſions of it; uſe all the means of grace diligently, and wait the Lord's time; and they ſhall certainly rejoice in his mercy. (*Iſai.* c. lv. v. 7, 8. *Matt.* c. xv. ver. 21—28.) And let all thoſe, who think they ſtand, take heed leſt they fall; and the Lord help us to cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *The ſon of an harlot*, &c.] It ſeems that Jephthah was the ſon of a woman of bad character; "a ſtrange woman," either a foreigner, or an Iſraelite, who from the infamy of her conduct, was thus called; (*Prov.* c. v. ver. 3. c. vi. v. 24.) The law of Moſes forbad that the offspring of ſuch connexions ſhould enter into the congregation of the Lord; and the filling of any office in church, or ſtate ſeem eſpecially to be intended in that law; (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 2.) But the princes of Gilead, conſidering him as a man of approved courage, and conduct, either did not recollect that law, or thought that it might on this emergency be diſpenſed with; eſpecially as Jephthah had already, as is probable, begun to fight againſt the Ammonites, and was on that account entitled to the command; (c. x. v. 18.) And the Lord was pleaſed to confirm their choice of him; that they, who had made themſelves vile by their ſins, might be delivered from their enemies by one, who lay under ſo diſgraceful a ſtigma: and that Jephthah himſelf might be kept from being exalted above meaſure; when he conſidered himſelf as marked in the law of God with the ſame brand as the Ammonites, whom he had conquered.

V. 2. *Gilead*, &c.] This Gilead ſeems to have been a deſcendant of him, from whom the country derived it's name. Jephthah, as the ſon of an harlot, had no right to any ſhare in the inheritance; but he had not deſerved to be turned deſtitute, as if he had been a vagabond, or a malefactor. His brethren were probably ſome of the elders of Gilead; for he attributed his ill uſage to their hatred, (v. 7;) being of an enterprizing ſpirit, perhaps they ſuſpected him of ambitious deſigns.

V. 3. *Vain men*, &c.] A number of men of broken fortunes, and unſettled diſpoſitions joined themſelves to him, (1 *Sam.* c. xxii. v. 2:) it appears not that they attempted any thing improper: but made repriſals on thoſe nations, who oppreſſed Iſrael. In which way of life they learned hardineſs, boldneſs, and military ſkill; and Jeph-

8 And the elders of Gilead ſaid unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayeſt go with us, and fight againſt the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

9 And Jephthah ſaid unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight againſt the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, ſhall I be your head?

10 And the elders of Gilead ſaid unto Jephthah, the LORD be witneſs between us, if we do not ſo according to thy words.

11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

12 And Jephthah ſent meſſengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, ſaying, What haſt thou to do with me, that thou art come againſt me to fight in my land?

13 And the king of the children of Ammon anſwered unto the meſſengers of Jephthah, becauſe Iſrael took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore reſtore thoſe *lands* again peaceably.

14 And Jephthah ſent meſſengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon,

15 And ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith Jephthah, Iſrael took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon:

16 But when Iſrael came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderneſs unto the Red ſea, and came to Kadeſh;

17 Then Iſrael ſent meſſengers unto the king of Edom, ſaying, Let me, I pray thee, paſs through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they ſent unto the king of Moab; but he would not *conſent*: and Iſrael abode in Kadeſh.

18 Then they went along through the wilderneſs, and compaſſed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the eaſt ſide of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other ſide of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the border of Moab.

19 And Iſrael ſent meſſengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heſhbon; and Iſrael ſaid unto him, Let us paſs, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place.

20 But Sihon truſted not Iſrael to paſs through his coaſt: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought againſt Iſrael.

21 And the LORD God of Iſrael delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Iſrael, and they ſmote them: ſo Iſrael poſſeſſed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.

22 And they poſſeſſed all the coaſts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderneſs even unto Jordan.

23 So now, the LORD God of Iſrael hath diſpoſſeſſed the Amorites from before his people Iſrael, and ſhouldſt thou poſſeſs it?

24 Wilt not thou poſſeſs that which Chemoſh thy god giveth thee to poſſeſs? So

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thah thus acquired that reputation, which made way for his advancement: and being a godly man, we may ſuppoſe that he alſo inſtructed his followers in true religion.

V. 8. *Therefore we turn*, &c.] The elders acknowledged, that they had uſed him ill, and deſired to appoint him their captain, that they might make him ſome amends for their former injuſtice.

V. 11. *And Jephthah uttered*, &c.] Jephthah, before he undertook this important ſervice, ſought the Lord's direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing very particularly in fervent prayer, as one who would go forth in faith, and expected all his ſucceſs from God. The Mizpeh here mentioned was eaſt of Jordan, and was called Mizpeh of Gilead, (v. 29,) and Mizpeh of Moab, in contradiſtinction from another place of the ſame name, which lay weſt of Jordan.

V. 12. *And Jephthah ſent*, &c.] Perhaps by divine direction, he propoſed peace to the Ammonites before he declared war againſt them, according to the law of Moſes; (*Deut.* c. xx. v. 10, 11.)

V. 24. *Wilt thou not*, &c?] Jephthah did not allow Chemoſh to be really a God: but he ſpake to the Ammonites according to their notions; who were wont to aſcribe their ſucceſs to the aſſiſtance of this ſuppoſed deity. The whole of this meſſage ſhews that Jephthah had well ſtudied the hiſtorical part of the books of Moſes, (*Num.* c. xxi. v. 26—30.) His argument was very clear, and his demand very reaſonable; for he only required, that the Ammonites ſhould ceaſe to harraſs a people, who neither had injured, nor intended to injure them. Upon their refuſal the war became juſt, and neceſſary: and therefore he ſolemnly appealed to the Lord to judge betwixt Iſrael, and whom-

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whomſoever the LORD our God ſhall drive out from before us, them will we poſſeſs.

25 And now, *art* thou any thing better than Balak the ſon of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever ſtrive againſt Iſrael, or did he ever fight againſt them,

26 While Iſrael dwelt in Heſhbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coaſts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time?

27 Wherefore I have not ſinned againſt thee, but thou doeſt me wrong to war againſt me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Iſrael and the children of Ammon.

28 Howbeit, the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he ſent him.

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah; and he paſſed over Gilead and Manaſſeh, and paſſed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he paſſed over *unto* the children of Ammon.

30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and ſaid, If thou ſhalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31 Then it ſhall be, that whatſoever cometh forth of the doors of my houſe to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, ſhall ſurely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

32 So Jephthah paſſed over unto the children of Ammon to fight againſt them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

33 And he ſmote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great ſlaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were ſubdued before the children of Iſrael.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his houſe, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and ſhe *was his* only child: beſide her he had neither ſon nor daughter.

35 And it came to paſs, when he ſaw her, that he rent his clothes, and ſaid, Alas, my daughter! thou haſt brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

36 And ſhe ſaid unto him, My father, *if* thou haſt opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath pro-

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the Ammonites, and to decide in favour of thoſe, who had the more righteous cauſe. Every declaration of war implies ſuch an appeal; but it is ſeldom made upon ſuch good grounds, and in the ſame ſpirit of humble faith.

V. 30, 31.] Perhaps Jephthah's army was ſmall, and his courage was ready to fail through unbelief, and the proſpect of imminent danger; and therefore he joined a ſolemn vow to his earneſt prayers. But the vow itſelf was evidently raſh and improper. The Lord had preſcribed the animals, that were to be offered in the different kinds of ſacrifices. There were alſo different kinds of vows, and particular regulations of them. It was therefore very wrong to vow, that whatſoever firſt came forth of the doors of his houſe, "ſhould be the Lord's, and be offered for a "burnt-offering:" A dog, cat, or other unclean animal might firſt have met him; but it was likely that one of his family would; which indeed he ſeems to have expected. Not being ſo well acquainted with the preceptive part of the books of Moſes, as with the hiſtorical, he ſeems to have confounded in his mind the ſeveral laws concerning ſacrifices, and vows; and eſpecially to have had ſome confuſed idea of the law, and cuſtom of devoting perſons, or things to utter deſtruction; (*Note Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 28, 29:) which being eſpecially intended for the enemies of God, and things abuſed to idolatry, &c; he erroneouſly applied to innocent perſons, and Iſraelites, over whoſe lives he could have no power, either in his public, or private character: and he ſuppoſed that the execution of this vow was by offering them for a burnt-offering. And it appears, that his judgment was not only confuſed through ignorance of the divine law; but that it was alſo perverted by a too great familiarity with the cuſtoms of the ſurrounding idolaters, who, on ſuch emergencies, frequently vowed, and offered human ſacrifices; ſuppoſing them acceptable to the Deity, in proportion to the pain which they occaſioned to themſelves.

V. 34—40.] Many writers have endeavoured to ſhew that Jephthah did not ſacrifice his daughter, but that he ſhut her up in perpetual ſolitude, and virginity: and they urge in favour of that opinion, that "ſhe bewailed her vir-"ginity," not her death; and that "ſhe knew no man:" and they ſuppoſe that the daughters of Iſrael went to condole with her four times in the year, and not to lament her death. But it is not likely that it ſhould become a cuſtom, not only for her acquaintance, or the daughters of Gilead, but for thoſe of all Iſrael, thus to flock to her four times in the year: and we never read of either law, or cuſtom in the Old Teſtament for any perſon to be devoted to the Lord by perpetual celibacy: on the contrary, marriage was deemed ſo honourable in all, and bearing children, in the women; that to die unmarried, or childleſs was deemed diſgraceful, as well as a misfortune; (*Luke* c. i. v. 25:) which ſeems to have occaſioned the expreſſions above-mentioned. As her death was ſuppoſed to be for the glory of God, and the good of Iſrael, ſo pious a perſon, as ſhe evidently

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ceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.

37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me; Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.

38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away *for* two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her *according* to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel,

40 *That* the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

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was, would not bewail on that account; but, according to the sentiment of all the Israelitish women, she would bewail that she died unmarried, and childless, especially as her father had no other child, nor any prospect of posterity: and had she been shut up in perpetual solitude, she need not have requested two months, to bewail her virginity, for she had all her remaining life to do it in. It would be very wrong to decide positively in so controverted a case, which at last is more matter of curiosity, than of edification: it however appears to me most probable, that Jephthah, did offer his daughter as a burnt-offering, perhaps induced thereto by a misapprehension of Abraham's being commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac. In this he acted conscientiously, and he shewed his readiness to part with any thing for the glory of God: but his conscience was erroneous, and his error arose from his ignorance of the Scriptures. Had he been properly instructed, he would doubtless have repented of making such a rash vow, and have offered a sin-offering, with his thank-offerings for his victory, at the altar of Shiloh: and not have added one fault to another; in treating his own child, who appears to have been a most dutiful, amiable, and pious young woman; who came out with songs of praise to the Lord for his goodness to Israel, and congratulations of Jephthah's success against their enemies; as if she had been the accursed enemy of God, and of his people: much less would he have offered so horrid a sacrifice to Jehovah, who had expressly forbidden them, as "an abomination, which he "hated;" (*Deut.* c. xii. v. 31.) Some account and extenuation of the affair may be given, but he cannot be vindicated in it. When Saul had rashly brought Jonathan under the curse of utter destruction, the people rescued him, and did right, for Saul, not Jonathan, was the transgressor; and the whole transaction shews how little the people were acquainted with, or governed by the law of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the sins of parents so often occasion disgrace, and hardship to their children; this should unite with higher motives to induce men to govern their passions according to the law of God. Activity, capacity, prudence, and piety will often render a man superior to all the disadvantages of his birth; and the hardships of his youth will prepare him for the services, of his future life. We should not injure, or despise the meanest person; for we know not how soon we may supplicate their assistance. It is especially dangerous to mal-treat the servants of God; and many who do so in prosperity, in seasons of terror, and distress, are glad to seek the benefit of their protection, counsel, and prayers: and in all ages, they, whom God hath most honoured, and employed, have previously been treated even by those, to whom they afterwards were most useful, with contempt, and injustice. And none ought to be discouraged, or surprised by it; as they are dealt with in the manner that Joseph, Moses, Jephthah, and David were; nay in this especially are followers of the Son of God, who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, before he was exalted to be a Prince, and Saviour. Thus also the Lord is continually treated: men neglect his service, despise his authority, and rob him of his glory; yet in their distress they apply unto him for to save them. But as he forgives without upbraidings the penitent sinner, so ought his people to behave to their enemies: nor will Jesus himself save any who do not consent, that he should reign over them; and his disciples, also should seek to reform those, whose temporal distresses they relieve. Those undertakings are like to prosper, and those public situations to be well filled, respecting which the Lord is consulted and trusted in simple faith, prayer, and conscientious obedience. They, who possess the most courageous faith, will be the most disposed for peace, and the readiest to make advances, and concessions in order thereto: and when rapacity, and ambition, cloking their designs under the mask of equity; (for though few men love justice, most would be thought to do so;) render such endeavours unavailing; having shewn that we would, if possibly, live peaceable with all men, we may safely leave the matter with the Lord. And as the Judge of all the earth, he will award to those who delight in contention, public or private, a recompense meet for their turbulent dispositions, and evil deeds. As far as we are acquainted with the word of God, we shall find a clear light shine upon our paths, discovering to us the safe and happy way: but, even if we act uprightly, yet are ignorant of the Scriptures, we shall fall into lamentable mistakes, to the dishonour of God, and the great discomfort of our souls. This should incite us to a diligent study of the whole word of God, that we may be completed in the knowledge of the will of the Lord: and this should remind ministers to be exact, copious, and frequent, in discussing practical subjects; that they, who are disposed to perform their duty, may not be left to sin through ignorance or mistake. How checkered are the scenes of this mortal life! Sorrow treads upon the heels of mirth; and our choicest comforts, often through our own unwatchfulness, become the occasions of our severest trials: but we need the less wonder at this, when we observe, how defective the characters of the best of men are; and how the best actions are often connected with such, as are utterly

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CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. Jephthah abuſed by the men of Ephraim, ſeverely puniſhing them, and ſoon after dying, v. 1—7. *2d. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon ſucceſſively judging Iſrael. v.* 8—15.

AND the men of Ephraim gathered themſelves together, and went northward, and ſaid unto Jephthah, Wherefore paſſedſt thou over to fight againſt the children of Ammon, and didſt not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine houſe upon thee with fire.

2 And Jephthah ſaid unto them, I and my people were at great ſtrife with the children of Ammon; and, when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.

3 And when I ſaw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and paſſed over againſt the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand; wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight againſt me?

4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead ſmote Ephraim, becauſe they ſaid, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manaſſites.

5 And the Gileadites took the paſſages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *ſo*, that when thoſe Ephraimites which were eſcaped ſaid, Let me go over, that the men of Gilead ſaid unto him, *Art* thou an Ephraimite? If he ſaid, Nay;

6 Then ſaid they unto him, Say now Shibboleth; and he ſaid Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and ſlew him at the paſſages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thouſand.

7 And Jephthah judged Iſrael ſix years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

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unwarrantable. A chearful mind, diſpoſed to be grateful unto God, and to endure any thing for his honour, and out of love to his people; and a ready ſubmiſſion to parental authority, are ſuch beautiful bloſſoms, in young perſons, and promiſe ſuch fruit in riper years; that we muſt regret to ſee them blaſted by premature death; and lament that they, who have ſo well performed the inferior duties, are not ſpared to be uſeful in the more important relations of the married ſtate. But though their death is a loſs to ſociety, they are themſelves no loſers; for the preparation for an uſeful life will render death alſo comfortable, in whatever way, they may be called hence. In lawful vows, when we have opened our "mouth unto the Lord, we "may not go back;" we ſhould therefore be very conſiderate in forming them, that we may not involve ourſelves, or others, in diſtreſs, perplexities, or temptations: but nothing can oblige us to that which is in itſelf unlawful. With this ſingle exception we cannot do too much to expreſs our gratitude for mercies received, or part with too much for the glory of God. Though we cannot approve of the conduct of Jephthah; we may well admire, and imitate his reſolution, and ſelf-denial, and ſtill more thoſe of his daughter. Let us not then forget the love of the Father in giving his Son, or of the Son in giving himſelf a *real*, and acceptable ſacrifice for the ſins of rebellious man. Bought with ſuch a price, let us preſent our bodies, and ſouls for a living ſacrifice unto God; and look forward with heartfelt ſatisfaction to that country, where ignorance, error, ſin, or ſorrow ſhall be known no more: where the believer's victory will be complete, his triumphs unalloyed, and unſullied, and his hallelujahs, uninterrupted, and eternal.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—6. *And the men of Ephraim*, &c.] (*Note*, c. viii. v. 1.) Jephthah was a Manaſſite, and the Ephraimites had the ſame quarrel with him, that they had formerly had with Gideon: but their reſentment vented itſelf in a more outrageous, and abuſive manner. We cannot find much to blame in Jephthah's anſwer: but it was not ſo conciliating as that of Gideon had been. They had it ſeems been ſent to, and would not come, and their anger was therefore extremely unreaſonable: but inſtead of being ſatisfied with Jephthah's arguments, they proceeded to aſſault him; and irritated the Gileadites by abuſive language; as if they had been the refuſe of the deſcendants of Joſeph, who had been baniſhed for their crimes beyond Jordan. But the Gileadites took a moſt ſevere revenge upon them, for getting poſſeſſion of the fords of Jordan, they ſlew great numbers of them, when indeed *they* were fugitives; having artfully deviſed to diſtinguiſh them by their provincial pronunciation of the Hebrew word, which ſignifies a river. How far Jephthah concurred in this cruel revenge cannot be determined; but it was entirely unjuſtifiable, and exceedingly weakened the common cauſe of Iſrael.

V. 7. *Judged Iſrael*, &c.] It ſeems after this tranſaction, all Iſrael quietly ſubmitted to Jephthah, as their judge: but he lived but a ſhort time, and ſaw little comfort after his advancement.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt pride prevails in the heart, diſcord, and contention will proceed from it: and when inſolence eſcapes chaſtiſement, it often grows more abuſive. But ſuch perſons will at length meet with thoſe, who are as ready to revenge, as others have been to endure their affronts. Nothing is more fooliſh than ſcurrility: without any advantage it rouſes the moſt implacable reſentment, and prepares the way for bloodſhed. Thus the tongue, "that "unruly evil, ſets on fire the whole courſe of nature, and

8 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Iſrael.

9 And he had thirty ſons and thirty daughters, *whom* he ſent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his ſons: and he judged Iſrael ſeven years.

10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

11 And after him Elon a Zebulonite judged Iſrael; and he judged Iſrael ten years.

12 And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon, in the country of Zebulun.

13 And after him Abdon the ſon of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Iſrael.

14 And he had forty ſons, and thirty nephews, that rode on threeſcore and ten aſscolts: and he judged Iſrael eight years.

15 And Abdon the ſon of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

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2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whoſe name *was* Manoah: and his wife *was* barren, and bare not.

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and ſaid unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and beareſt not: but thou ſhalt conceive, and bear a ſon.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor ſtrong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing:*

5 For, lo, thou ſhalt conceive, and bear a ſon; and no razor ſhall come on his head:

" is ſet on fire of hell." But they, who are moſt ready to boaſt, hector, and revile, generally prove cowardly in real danger; and might have their own reproaches, with great propriety, retorted upon them; but that Chriſtians muſt not render railing for railing. In the origin, or the event of contention, both parties are commonly to blame: even good men cannot always bear the ingratitude, and ill-treatment of thoſe, whom they have ſerved, with proper calmneſs: nor have all of them equally the talent of turning away wrath by a ſoft anſwer; and in a juſt cauſe, we are apt to be hurried on by our paſſions to unwarrantable lengths: for " the beginning of ſtrife is like the letting " forth of water, therefore let us leave off contention " before it be meddled with." Yet even in ſuch lamentable ſcenes, the Lord is righteous, and proſecutes his ſettled plan of reſiſting, and abaſing the proud. The ſplendour of men's exploits, and the excellency of their characters often increaſe the number, and rage of their enemies: nor need they be ſurpriſed, if they, who ought to thank, commend, reward, and congratulate them upon their ſucceſs in dangerous attempts to promote the public welfare, ſhould abuſe, and hate them, and threaten their deſtruction. None is prepared to do good in ſuch a world as this, who hath not learned to expect, and accept of evil, as his recompenſe from man; and to perſevere in hope of a better recompenſe from a gracious God. No contentions are ſo bitter, as thoſe, which ariſe betwixt brethren, or betwixt rivals for honour, and precedency. What need have we then to watch and pray againſt envy, pride, ambition, and thoſe evil tempers, which ſet the world as it were in flames, from age to age, and which by horrid carnage gratify that firſt great murderer the devil? Alas! that ſo many *Shibboleths* ſhould be invented to divide the church alſo; to be the watchword of angry diſputants, and the pretext for profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt abuſing, and perſecuting each other! May the Lord incline all his people " to follow " after the things, which make for peace, and things, " whereby one may edify another!" Many renowned and envied perſons die of broken hearts on account of perſonal, and domeſtic affections: ſo that their inward anguiſh muſt ſoften their bittereſt enemies into compaſſion, if they knew the whole. The Lord is to be acknowledged, in giving domeſtic comforts; as well as ſubmitted to, when he withholds, or withdraws them: but increaſing families bring increaſing cares, and duties, in inſtructing, providing for, and ſettling children in a ſuitable manner; which cannot be neglected without guilt, and painful conſequences.—In fine the happieſt life of individuals, and the happieſt ſtate of ſociety, is that, which affords the feweſt remarkable events. To live in credit, and quiet, to be peacefully uſeful in our circle, to poſſeſs a clear conſcience, and to enjoy communion with God our Saviour whilſt we live; and to die at peace with God and man, forms the ſubſtance of all that a wiſe man can deſire.

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for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

6 Then the woman came, and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name.

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

8 Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day.

11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I *am*.

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: how shall we order the child? and *how* shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware.

14 She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD: for Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that, when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour?

18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?

19 So Manoah took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the

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dead body, &c, was broken, and to be begun over again. But Samson was devoted by the Lord's express appointment all the days of his life; and it seems probable that the nature of this separation was not so strict, as the voluntary vow. The infant in the womb, and at the breast would subsist upon the same nourishment, with the mother, and therefore she was required to observe the same rules, during that period: she would also be led to expect something extraordinary, from a child whose birth was attended by such observances. (1 *Sam.* c. i. v. 11. *Luke* c. i. v. 15.)

V. 6. *A man of God*, &c.] That is, an holy prophet, one peculiarly devoted to, and honoured of God. This supposed man of God is said to have been "like an angel;" by which it is evident that angels, as they actually appeared to the people of God, were not distinguishable in general from prophets, except by a more venerable appearance: though in the *emblematic* description of them in some parts of Scripture, they are represented with wings. Some attention to this circumstance should be paid by those designers, or painters, who would preserve *historical truth* in their performances.

V. 8.] Manoah doubted not the performance of the promise, which had been made to his wife in his absence; but only prayed that the same supposed prophet might be sent to instruct them in their duty relative thereto. This was the genuine exercise of faith.

V. 16. *Though thou detain*, &c.] Manoah, not knowing who this messenger of God was, seems to have doubted whether he should prepare him a banquet, or a sacrifice; (c. vi. v. 18—21:) to this hesitation this answer was directed: "for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of "the Lord;" this seems to imply, that had he known, who it was, the thought of offering a burnt-offering, would not have been improper. But as he took him only for a man, it arose from ignorance, and was very sinful: the same would have been equally true, had he been the greatest created angel. (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 17.)

V. 18. *Secret*.] Or wonderful; the same name that is given to the Messiah by the prophet. (*Isaiah*, c. ix. v. 6. *Gen.* c. xxxii. v. 29.) In consequence of this intimation Manoah, though no priest, offered his burnt-offering, &c, upon a rock, where some rude altar was hastily prepared; and he was accepted in so doing: probably fire from the rock consumed the sacrifice; (c. vi. v. 21.) He offered it to Jehovah, and he did wondrously; (for the words "the "angel" are not in the original,) according to the meaning of his name "wonderful;" for in the presence of Manoah, and his wife, he ascended towards heaven with the flame of

LORD:

LORD: and *the angel* did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 (But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife.) Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would, as at this time, have told us *such things* as these.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

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fire from off the altar, and by that Manoah knew him to be the *angel Jehovah*, which occasioned his terror, lest death should be the consequence of having seen God. From these circumstances the reader will easily collect, whom Manoah supposed the angel to have been.

V. 23. *If the Lord*, &c.] Manoah's wife being, at that time at least, the stronger in faith, encouraged her husband, by the consideration that their accepted sacrifice, united with the promises, which had been given, to assure them of the Lord's favour; for had he intended their destruction, he would not have done those wondrous works, or have spoken those gracious words unto them. The revelation of the gospel, the appointment of divine ordinances, as means of grace, the favouring us with the written, or preached word, and the stirring up our minds to pay regard thereto, are all hopeful tokens of special love. But when we are taught above all things to desire the salvation of Christ, and to fear coming short of it: where we take delight in his ordinances, and commandments, and experimentally know that our prayers are heard, and answered, we may safely, and confidently infer, that the Lord would not have done such things for us, and shewn such things to us, if he had meant our destruction, nay if he had not appointed us unto salvation. (*Psalm* lxvi. v. 16—20. 1 *Thess.* c. v. v. 9.)

V. 25. *In the camp of Dan*, &c.] Probably that tribe, which lay next the Philistines land, was encamped to preserve their country from their depredations: amongst them Samson discovered at times such extraordinary courage, strength, and activity, as evidently proceeded from the Spirit of the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is our duty to prevent sin, and misery, as far as we can, and our honest endeavours for that purpose will be accepted of God, whether we succeed or not: but his judgments are a great deep, and for infinitely wise reasons he is pleased to *permit* their entrance, and to over-rule them to kind and merciful purposes. We ought to make haste to keep God's commandments; but to wait patiently for his performance of his promises: his purposes will gradually unfold, his plan will in due season be completed: and when we see the whole, the wisdom, justice, and goodness of it, will be more bright than the noon-day sun. We may in the mean time be thankful that the Lord hath a remnant in all ages; and though they have trials, which are unknown to, unpitied by, or incapable of relief from, their fellow-creatures: yet they have no sorrows, which the Lord doth not pity; none which he will not remove in the best time, and manner: and he will by various means discover to them the kind notice he takes of their troubles, for their support, until he sees good to relieve them. Retirement is always friendly to communion with God, and his people are never less alone, than when alone. Every promise of God implies a correspondent duty, and in expecting the performance of the one, we must not neglect the other: and those, who are peculiarly honoured of God, must be proportionably ready to deny themselves for his sake. If parents desire their children to be mortified to fleshly lusts, and devoted to God, they should be careful to be so themselves. The parental duty commences even from the child's conception, and every thing should be attended to which may conduce to it's welfare of body, and soul: prayer should be offered in it's behalf; for an immortal creature is brought into existence, which will be happy or miserable for ever; and it is conceived in sin, and cannot be holy or happy, without the special grace of God, and an interest in the great Redeemer. We need also divine direction in respect of our children's education, lest any of the rules of God's word should be forgotten, mistaken, or neglected; that being trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, there may be a well-grounded hope of their becoming useful to the church, and to the world. Happy is it, when married persons possess unreserved confidence in each other, and can converse freely together concerning their spiritual experiences; that they may have the benefit of each others counsel, and prayers: (*Eccles.* c. iv. ver. 9—12:) the one may suggest hints, and encouragements, which did not occur to the other; and they, who at one time, or in one respect are the weakest, may at other times, and in other respects prove the strongest, and the wisest.—When we desire to know, that we may do the will of God, we may pray for instruction with the most unshaken assurance of it's being granted; (*James*, c. i. v. 5, 6:) but perhaps he may see good to teach us by means of our inferiors; and we should be ready to receive instruction in that humiliating manner. And true spiritual knowledge, grace, and consolation, always excite desires, and dictate prayers, for further communications, and displays of God's glory to our souls. They, whom he honours, as instruments of good to us,

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Samson's affection for a Philistine woman; his slaying a lion, as he went to see her; and his marriage with her, v. 1—9. 2d. His riddle expounded by the Philistines, through the treachery of his wife, v. 10—18. 3d. His killing thirty Philistines, and departing in anger; and his wife given to his companion, v. 19, 20.

AND Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me to wife.

3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

4 But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily

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we should honour likewise, yet not in any way derogatory to the glory of the Lord himself. But hospitality without grudging to those, who love his name, and a readiness to devote our substance to his glory, are always an ornament to the profession of godliness. In our best meant actions we are prone to forget or mistake the truths, and precepts of God's word, and need reminding of them: and a vain curiosity often supplants our proper attention to the plain practical parts of Scripture, especially those, which relate to our present duty: but we should be as willing to be ignorant of what the Lord is pleased to conceal, as willing to receive whatever he is pleased to teach us; and many of our prayers are most profitably answered, by being denied. The name of our Lord is wonderful, and secret, because incomprehensible: but by his wonderful works he makes himself known, as far as our instruction, and encouragement require it; and further knowledge would only puff us up with self-conceit: his chief display of himself is in the person of Jesus Christ, his co-equal Son, who, having offered on earth one sacrifice for our sins, and being risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, presents with acceptance our spiritual sacrifices, when offered through faith in his name. Happy are we, when our hearts, and affections ascend, whither the Saviour is gone before: we may then with pleasure, and admiration contemplate the wonders of redeeming love, and every discovery of his glory, will awe our souls into deeper reverence, and humiliation before him. This satan will sometimes attempt to convert into terror, and discouragement, whilst we compare his holiness, and majesty, with our meanness, and pollution. But he will not cast off those, who are humbly determined if they must perish to perish supplicating his mercy: having spared them when enemies, and taught them to value his salvation, he will answer their prayers, dispel their fears, and fulfil his largest promises; for which blessing they should wait with patient faith. When children possess in health the use of their limbs, senses, and understandings, parents have abundant cause for gratitude: but most of all, when they give early indications, that the Holy Spirit is working upon their tender minds, and preparing them for the service of God. This let us in the first place desire, seek, and pray for; and may this blessing be widely bestowed upon the rising generation!

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 4. *Knew not that it was of the Lord,* &c.] Many think that Samson contracted this marriage by special direction from the Lord: such marriages not being immoral in themselves, but forbidden on account of their pernicious consequences: (*Hos.* c. i. v. 2, 3.) That by intimation from God, he thus sought occasion against the Philistines: and shewed his respect to his parents by asking their concurrence; who opposed his marriage as long, as "they knew not that it was of the Lord." The words (v. 3.) translated, "she pleaseth me well," may be rendered, "the matter is right," and be considered as an intimation, that it was from God; upon which they consented, and went with him. This transaction was a type of Christ's espousing the church of the Gentiles, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But perhaps the expression only means, that it pleased God to leave Samson to follow his own inclinations, intending in his infinite wisdom to educe good from his misconduct, and his parents consented, because he was bent upon it. However his example is not recorded for our imitation.

N. B. The chronology from Exodus to the building of Solomon's temple, being four hundred and eighty years, is here computed upon the following obvious, though not certain scheme: fifty-seven years were spent in the wilderness, and under Joshua: to these are added the number of years assigned to each judge; with a supposed coincidence betwixt Jair in Gilead, and Tola in Canaan (c. 10;) for which thirteen years are allowed; and another betwixt Samson and Eli of about six years: this leaves sixty years from the death of Eli to the commencement of David's reign. As this seemed the most probable conjecture I could frame for this obscure period, I date the whole according to it, and only mention it on that account.

V. 5, 6. *To the vineyards of Timnath,* &c.] Samson when at a distance from his parents, was assaulted by, and tho' unarmed, easily slew a young strong lion; because "the "Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," and he mentioned not the extraordinary exploit to his parents. This was

upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and ſhe pleaſed Samſon well.

8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aſide to ſee the carcaſe of the lion: and behold, *there was* a ſwarm of bees and honey in the carcaſe of the lion.

9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcaſe of the lion.

10 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samſon made there a feaſt; for ſo uſed the young men to do.

11 And it came to paſs, when they ſaw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 And Samſon ſaid unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you; if ye can certainly declare it me within the ſeven days of the feaſt, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty ſheets and thirty change of garments:

13 But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then ſhall ye give me thirty ſheets and thirty change of garments. And they ſaid unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

14 And he ſaid unto them, out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the ſtrong came forth ſweetneſs. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

15 And it came to paſs on the ſeventh day, that they ſaid unto Samſon's wife, Entice thy huſband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, leſt we burn thee and thy fa-

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an earneſt of his victories over the Philiſtines, not by human might, or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. David in like manner ſlew a lion, and a bear, before he killed Goliath, and ſubdued the enemies of Iſrael: and Jeſus Chriſt in the wilderneſs, ere he entered upon his public miniſtry; and on the croſs, previous to his aſcenſion into glory, overcame the devil, that roaring lion, that goeth about ſeeking whom he may devour.

V. 8, 9.] By the ſpecial providence of God a ſwarm of bees had ſettled, and collected honey in the carcaſe of the lion; which was a moſt unlikely place for that purpoſe; being both inconvenient and offenſive to that delicate inſect, which draws honey from the moſt odoriferous flowers, and plants. This Samſon found, when he turned aſide to ſee the carcaſe, and perhaps to repeat his thanks for his deliverance.

V. 12—14.] When Samſon, in conformity to cuſtom celebrated his marriage feaſt, the Philiſtines brought him thirty companions, pretending reſpect, but probably placing them as a watch upon him, being aware of his great ſtrength. To prevent a worſe uſe of their time, Samſon propoſed his riddle as a trial of ingenuity, and a wager with each of them, of a ſheet, ſhirt, or other linen garment, and a change of raiment of all ſorts, that they could not reſolve it. The riddle, in its literal purport, meant no more, than that he had got honey, for food, and pleaſure from the lion, which in it's ſtrength, and fury was prepared to devour him. Yet this explanation of the riddle may be interpreted as containing another riddle of more importance, and more hard to be underſtood, except by the teaching of God—The victory of Chriſt over ſatan, by means of his humiliation, agonies, and death; and the exaltation that followed to him, the glory that redounded to the Father, and the ſpiritual advantages, which thence accrue to his people, ſeem immediately typified thereby. The entrance of ſin, the fall of man, and the ruin of the human race, through the malice of ſatan will iſſue in *his* deeper miſery, in God's greater glory, and in the increaſed felicity of all the redeemed, and of all holy creatures to all eternity. The perſecutions of the church have promoted it's purity, and proſperity. The trials, conflicts, and temptations of God's people, are productive of holineſs, and comfort to their ſouls in this world, and work for them an exceeding weight of glory in the next. Even the remains of indwelling ſin, and the very falls of *real believers*, become occaſions to them of deeper humility, more ſimple dependance on, and ardent love for the Saviour, more admiring gratitude to God, more compaſſion for their fellow ſinners, more fitneſs for many kinds of ſervice on earth, and greater meetneſs for the occupations of the redeemed in glory. And if any abuſe this ſacred truth, let them know, that they are not concerned in it; for *upright ſouls* are alwas rendered more watchful, humble, diligent, ſimple, compaſſionate, and fervent in prayer, by every falſe ſtep they make: at leaſt no others give evidence that they are believers. And even death that devouring monſter, that king of terrors, being robbed of his ſting, and ſtripped of his horror, tranſmits the ſoul to the realms of bliſs, and will ere long reſtore the body incorruptible immortal and glorious, to partake of endleſs felicity. In theſe, and many other ſenſes, "out of the eater comes "forth meat, and out of the ſtrong ſweetneſs."

V. 15.] The barbarity, inſolence, and ſelfiſhneſs of this conduct illuſtrate the miſery of Iſrael's bondage under ſuch tyrants. Mr. Henry notes, "That they ought not "to lay wagers, who cannot bear to loſe with better tem-"per:" we may add, that ſuch paſſions, and implacable reſentments are the common effects of affronted pride, and diſappointed covetouſneſs, in every kind, and degree of gaming: which is a good reaſon for entirely avoiding it. The ſeventh day here mentioned ſeems to have been the ſeventh day of the week, and the fourth of the feaſt:

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ther's houſe with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it* not *ſo*?

16 And Samſon's wife wept before him, and ſaid, Thou doſt but hate me, and loveſt me not: thou haſt put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and haſt not told *it* me. And he ſaid unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and ſhall I tell *it* thee?

17 And ſhe wept before him the ſeven days, while their feaſt laſted: and it came to paſs on the ſeventh day, that he told her, becauſe ſhe lay ſore upon him; and ſhe told the riddle to the children of her people.

18 And the men of the city ſaid unto him on the ſeventh day before the ſun went down, What *is* ſweeter than honey? and what *is* ſtronger than a lion? And he ſaid unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Aſhkelon, and ſlew thirty men of them, and took their ſpoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle: and his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's houſe.

20 But Samſon's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had uſed as his friend.

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the remaining part of which Samſon's wife ſpent in entreating him with tears to tell the riddle to her, out of fear of, or attachment to her countrymen; and at length prevailed.

V. 18. *If ye had not*, &c.] They could not have diſcovered it of themſelves, if they had not drawn it from him, by tampering with his wife.

V. 19. *The Spirit of the Lord*, &c.] He found himſelf, by an immediate impulſe of the Spirit of God directed, emboldened, and aſſiſted in this attack upon the enemies of Iſrael; which was fully juſtified by their public oppreſſion, without adverting to their treachery to Samſon.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In contracting marriage, the eye, the ear, the ſenſes are dangerous counſellors; beauty, and wit are very doubtful recommendations, and wiſdom, piety, and holineſs ought principally to be attended to. Next to the word of God, the concurrence of parents is requiſite to render that relation honourable, and comfortable. But parents ought to act with conſideration, and kindneſs in this matter: and if conſtrained to refuſe their concurrence; they ſhould give ſuch convincing, and important reaſons, as may prove that their refuſal, ſprings from wiſdom and affection, not from caprice, and ſeverity: and from an unwillingneſs that they ſhould make an imprudent choice, not from any diſpoſition to bind them, againſt their will, to a ſingle life. Yet ordinarily there can be no neceſſity for a perſon, that profeſſes godlineſs, to marry with one, who is manifeſtly irreligious. But the Lord can over-rule for the beſt of purpoſes, thoſe actions, which we muſt by no means imitate: his deſigns do not influence our conduct, unleſs he inform us of them; but his written word is our conſtant rule. We are always expoſed to danger of body, and ſoul, when alone, and when in company, but nothing can hurt us, except we are wandering from the path of duty. Even ſatan, "that roaring lion," may be effectually reſiſted, and completely overcome, if in anſwer to the prayer of faith, the Spirit of God communicate his ſtrength to our ſouls; in this way alone can we overcome this enemy; and thus all his temptations ſhall eventually conduce to our benefit: but by oſtentation, and we often loſe the comfort, and the real credit, of our beſt diſputed conflicts with our ſpiritual enemies. The ſpecial favours, which God beſtows upon us, can only be mentioned on ſome occaſions, to ſome perſons, and in great modeſty, without ſavouring of vain-glory; and we obtain ſome ſecret victories over temptation, for which we need repeatedly to bleſs God, but of which we cannot ſpeak particularly to our neareſt earthly friend. We ſhould be always ready to aſſiſt the comforts of others, by conferring with them on thoſe topics, which have comforted us; and alſo to impart to them our temporal good things: eſpecially to parents, and benefactors. We enjoy the moſt ſweetneſs from God's goodneſs to us when we moſt frequently turn aſide to meditate upon and bleſs God on that account: and as one ſucceſsful conflict prepares for another; ſo one ſeaſon of peculiar mercy is an earneſt of another. It is almoſt impoſſible to aſſociate with worldly people, without conforming to their vain cuſtoms: at beſt, when evident evil is avoided, we waſte time to no purpoſe: but we are called to redeem our time, and to do all to the glory of God. We ought conſtantly to watch and pray againſt pride, anger, and covetouſneſs, and to avoid every thing, that gives force to them! for their effects are inconceivably dreadful, when they acquire the aſcendancy. It is dangerous to be connected with thoſe, who will not be ſatisfied with any meaſure of love, or reſpect, except we will offend God, or injure ourſelves to oblige them; and a worldly wife, or a wordly friend is to a godly man, as an enemy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray him; and by aſſiduity and perſeverance will more, or leſs prevail, over his reſolutions, and prevail with him to make ſuch compliances, as will greatly injure his credit and comfort. Nor can thoſe connexions be comfortable or durable, where important ſecrets cannot be entruſted without the danger of being divulged. And, indeed ſatan's chief advantage againſt us, ariſes from his correſpondence with our deceitful hearts, and inbred luſts. But the wiſeſt counſels of wicked men are very fooliſhneſs, and all their gain is loſs at length: they ſecure ſome worldly intereſt, and for it loſe their lives, or their ſouls! We are naturally more prone to be angry with thoſe, who have injured us, than to repent of our ſin againſt God. Imprudent connexions commonly iſſue in ſpeedy ſeparations; nor are any more likely to aſperſe a man's character, cheat him of his property, or defile his bed, than they, who have been

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. Samſon finding his wife given to another; and deſtroying the corn fields, &c, of the Philiſtines by foxes, and fire-brands: who burn her, and her father, v. 1—6. 2d. Making great ſlaughter of them, delivered up by the Iſraelites, and killing a thouſand Philiſtines with the jaw-bone of an aſs, v. 7—17. 3d. Ready to periſh with thirſt, crying to the Lord, miraculouſly relieved, and afterwards judging Iſrael, v. 18—20.

BUT it came to paſs within a while after, in the time of wheat harveſt, that Samſon viſited his wife with a kid; and he ſaid, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not ſuffer him to go in.

2 And her father ſaid, I verily thought that thou hadſt utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is* not her younger ſiſter fairer than ſhe? take her, I pray thee, inſtead of her.

3 And Samſon ſaid concerning them, Now ſhall I be more blameleſs than the Philiſtines, though I do them a diſpleaſure.

4 And Samſon went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midſt between two tails.

5 And when he had ſet the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the ſtanding corn of the Philiſtines, and burnt up both the ſhocks, and alſo the ſtanding corn, with the vineyards *and* olives.

6 Then the Philiſtines ſaid, Who hath done this? and they anſwered, Samſon, the ſon-in-law of the Timnite, becauſe he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philiſtines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 And Samſon ſaid unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will ceaſe.

8 And he ſmote them hip and thigh with a great ſlaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

9 Then the Philiſtines went up, and pitched in Judah, and ſpread themſelves in Lehi.

10 And the men of Judah ſaid, Why are ye come up againſt us? and they anſwered, To bind Samſon are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

11 Then three thouſand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and ſaid to Samſon, Knoweſt thou not that the Philiſtines *are* rulers over us? what *is* this *that* thou haſt

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treated with unmerited kindneſs and confidence. But happy they, who feaſt upon the fruits of Chriſt's conflicts, and victories: all things ſhall work together for their good; and their ſharpeſt trials on earth, yea the ſevereſt agonies of death ſhall prove the occaſion of their loudeſt ſongs of triumphant joy, and praiſe in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1. *Viſited his wife*, &c.] Not knowing that his wife was given to another man, Samſon after a time found his anger ſubſide, and his affection revive: and accordingly he went to ſee her, taking with him a kid, on which to feaſt with her, and her friends.

V. 3—5.] We are to note, that Samſon was conſcious that he was to deliver Iſrael from the Philiſtines; and only waited for a fair occaſion to declare againſt them: this was afforded by their injurious treatment of him; which was a ſpecimen of the conduct of the Philiſtines towards the Iſraelites when moſt ſubmiſſive. And in the means, which he employed, we muſt advert to the power of God, both in ſupplying, and ſucceeding them; to mortify the pride, and puniſh the wickedneſs of the Philiſtines. The foxes were doubtleſs very numerous in thoſe parts, and the people very expert in taking them: Samſon probably employed others in procuring, and preparing them, by faſtening a lighted torch between the tails of two of them. Being thus let go, they would hinder each other from gaining their holes, in the woods, and would take ſhelter in the neighbouring corn-fields, and vineyards: and the weather being dry, the corn ripe, and the fire kindled in many places at once, we may eaſily conceive that great deſtruction would very ſpeedily be effected by this uncommon contrivance.

V. 6. *Burnt her*, &c.] Samſon's wife betrayed him, for fear of being burnt with fire; and thereby brought that very death upon herſelf, for having by her treachery provoked Samſon to this meaſure: thus the Jews crucified Chriſt, leſt his claim to be their king ſhould bring the Romans upon them; and thereby brought that very calamity upon themſelves.

V. 7. *Though ye*, &c.] The Philiſtines had indeed avenged Samſon of thoſe, who had injured him; but they were inſtigated by hatred to him, though they dared not to attack him: therefore he purpoſed, before he ceaſed, more effectually to avenge himſelf, and his people upon them.

V. 8. *Hip and thigh*, &c.] This obſcure phraſe, which has greatly perplexed the critics, probably means, that he run upon them, as they fled from him, and threw them down, and trampled them to death. "To go down, and dwell "on the top of a rock," ſeems alſo very obſcure. Perhaps he ſlew the enemy upon a mountain, from which he deſcended, and then went, and dwelt alone on the top of a rock. This ſeems to have been for retirement, that he might not be ſurpriſed by the Philiſtines, and becauſe he choſe not to truſt the Iſraelites.

V. 11. *What is this*, &c.] The Iſraelites were ſunk into done

done unto us? and he ſaid unto them, As they did unto me, ſo have I done unto them.

12 And they ſaid unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philiſtines. And Samſon ſaid unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourſelves.

13 And they ſpake unto him, ſaying, No; but we will bind thee faſt, and deliver thee into their hand: but ſurely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

14 *And* when he came unto Lehi, the Philiſtines ſhouted againſt him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands looſed from off his hands.

15 And he found a new jaw-bone of an aſs, and put forth his hand and took it, and ſlew a thouſand men therewith.

16 And Samſon ſaid, with the jaw-bone of an aſs, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an aſs have I ſlain a thouſand men.

17 And it came to paſs when he had made an end of ſpeaking, that he caſt away the jaw-bone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

18 And he was ſore athirſt, and called on the LORD and ſaid, Thou haſt given this great deliverance into the hand of thy ſervant: and now ſhall I die for thirſt, and fall into the hand of the uncircumciſed?

19 But God clave an hollow place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his ſpirit came again,

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an abject frame of ſpirit; and were ſatisfied with their bondage to the Philiſtines, or deſpaired of deliverance, or baſely feared the trouble, and peril of attempting it; or they would not have yielded up their champion in ſo baſe a manner.

V. 12. *That ye will not fall*, &c.] Samſon quietly ſubmitted to be bound by the Iſraelites, who were intentionally his murderers, and to be delivered up to the Philiſtines: but he indented with them, that they would not themſelves fall upon him, leſt he ſhould be conſtrained to deſtroy them, inſtead of their enemies, which he was unwilling to do, though ſo ſhamefully treated by them. In all this he was an evident type of Chriſt, who in his retirement was rudely aſſaulted by the Jews, whom he could eaſily have deſtroyed, but would not: into their hands he ſurrendered himſelf, and they bound him, and delivered him up to the Romans to be crucified; though even the bonds of death could not hold him, or prevent his victories, and triumphs.

V. 14, 15.] When the "Spirit of the Lord came "mightily upon him," his bonds were ſoon broken: ("for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:") and then the jaw bone of the contemptible aſs, became a more formidable weapon than ſword or ſpear, and a thouſand men fell before him, being alike unable to reſiſt, or to eſcape!

V. 16, 17. *And Samſon*, &c.] Elated with this ſurpriſing victory, he celebrated his own praiſe, inſtead of giving glory to God, which rendered the conſequent trial needful, and ſalutary. Ramath-lehi ſignifies, the lifting up of the jaw-bone.

V. 18. *And he was ſore*, &c.] Thus he felt his weakneſs in himſelf, as before he had ſhewn his ſtrength, when aſſiſted of God: this urgent diſtreſs reminded him of his danger, led him to thank God for his deliverance, and to pray unto him for preſent relief.

V. 19. *In the jaw*, &c.] Or in the place, where the jaw lay, or in Lehi, a ſpring was ſupernaturally opened, by which he was relieved from his danger; and he called the place "En-hakkore," that is the well of him that cried.

Chriſt too in his grand conflict with the enemies of our ſalvation, "thirſted," but had no well opened for his relief: for he drank of the cup of the wrath of God for us, which Samſon did not; as well as trod the wine-preſs *alone*, as did Samſon on this occaſion. After this event Samſon was ſubmitted to, as judge by the people. The twenty years during which he judged Iſrael, are ſaid to be in the days of the Philiſtines, which intimates that their deliverance was incomplete, and their enemies very formidable; becauſe, as we may ſuppoſe, they had not duly repented and returned to the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

He gains the nobleſt victory, in every conteſt, who firſt propoſes reconciliation; eſpecially when this is done by the offended party, and the ſuperior relation: and ſuch conceſſions adorn the characters even of thoſe, who are moſt renowned for courage. Where the knowledge of God, and of his law are wanting, the moſt ordinary tranſactions of life will be conducted upon ſuch principles, as tend to confuſion, and licentiouſneſs: and wicked men, conſcious of their own baſe intentions, will ſuſpect the worſt of deſigns; or pretend to do ſo, to cover their own injuſtice: and their propoſals, made under the guiſe of peace, are no leſs to be dreaded, than their open injuſtice. It is therefore beſt to avoid all fellowſhip with them. We ſhould endeavour to live at peace with all men: and in caſe that be impracticable, to avoid every thing, which may render us juſtly chargeable with the conſequences of contention. And ere the Lord proceed to execute vengeance, he will manifeſt the inexcuſable wickedneſs of the hearts and lives of his enemies. In the hands of his ſervants the moſt contemptible inſtruments are ſufficient, and ſucceſsful. When men obtain plenty by rapine, and abuſe it upon their luſts, they may reaſonably expect to have it taken from them: nor does it require much ability, to be an incendiary, and kindle the fire of diſcord in families, churches and nations: indeed ſuch wretches are inſtigated by one more ſubtle, and malicious than themſelves, and will probably be conſumed in

and he revived. Wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day.

20 And he judged Iſrael in the days of the Philiſtines twenty years.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Samſon in danger at Gaza through an harlot, and his eſcape, v. 1—3. 2d. His love of Delilah, her treachery, his hair ſhorn, the Lord departing from him, his being ſeized, impriſoned, and made ſport of by the Philiſtines, v. 4—25. 3d. His death with multitudes of his enemies, and his burial by his friends, v. 26—31.

THEN went Samſon to Gaza, and ſaw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

2 *And it was told* the Gazites, ſaying, Samſon is come hither. And they compaſſed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, ſaying, in the morning when it is day we ſhall kill him.

3 And Samſon lay till midnight, and aroſe at midnight and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two poſts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his ſhoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that *is* before Hebron.

4 And it came to paſs afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whoſe name *was* Delilah.

5 And the lords of the Philiſtines came up unto her, and ſaid unto her, Entice him, and

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the fire, which they have kindled. They who ſin to avoid ſuffering, will bring troubles upon themſelves, againſt which they can have no protector. Heartleſs profeſſors, who value the friendſhip, and fear the frown of the world, and are the ſlaves of ſin, and ſatan, will cenſure, hate, and betray thoſe, who call them to liberty in the ſervice of God: and to ſave themſelves in times of perſecution, will apoſtatize, and turn betrayers, and accuſers of the brethren: (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 9, 10:) and in ſuch men's judgment, the beſt ſervices, and moſt dangerous endeavours to do good, deſerve reproach, condemnation, and puniſhment. But we ſhall not be diſcouraged by ſuch things, when we conſider how the Saviour was treated: we ſhall ſee how we ought to act, when we obſerve his meekneſs, patience, and dying prayers for his crucifiers: and we ſhall diſcard our fears, when we conſider his triumphs, his aſcenſion, his glory, and his promiſe, that they, who ſuffer with him, ſhall alſo be glorified with him. Whenever we are peculiarly favoured of God, without great watchfulneſs, the pride of our hearts will lead us to rob him of his glory: hence every comfort muſt be counterbalanced with a croſs: and the more any man is made uſeful to others, the more mortifying mementos he generally needs of his own weakneſs, folly, and unworthineſs. By ſuch painful diſcipline we are taught to know our own place, and to feel our entire dependance on, and continual obligations to the Lord. When our trials have produced theſe effects, they ſhall be removed, and become ſources of gratitude, and comfort; and excite us to raiſe freſh monuments of the goodneſs of God. But in this world our enemies will continue powerful, and our victories will be incomplete: ere long we ſhall be made more than conquerors, and render perfect and eternal hallelujahs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—3. *Then went Samſon*, &c.] Hitherto Samſon's character, though uncommon, has appeared illuſtrious: and when we conſider him as raiſed up to deliver Iſrael; and inſtructed, as well as aſſiſted in doing it, in that unprecedented manner, which beſt tended to mortify the Philiſtines, and to manifeſt the mighty power of God; we may fairly vindicate moſt of his paſt conduct, and ſafely imitate much of it: and notwithſtanding many infirmities we have hitherto met with nothing inconſiſtent with his character of a Nazarite. But in this chapter we find him behaving in ſo wicked, and infatuated a manner, that many have been led to queſtion, whether he were a godly man or not. But the apoſtle has determined that queſtion; (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 32:) and adverting to the doctrines, and examples of Scripture, the deceitfulneſs of the human heart, the artifices of ſatan, and the methods, in which the Lord frequently deals with his people, we may interpret this riddle of a man, (as ſome have called him,) and perceive that we are not very different; and may thus learn uſeful leſſons from this hiſtory, which puzzles ſome, ſtumbles others, and emboldens others to cavil, and object. Confiding in his great ſtrength, and the terror of him, with which the Philiſtines were ſeized, he boldly entered Gaza, one of their chief cities, on what account we know not; and there was tempted to go in unto an harlot, to gratify his ſenſual luſt. This diſgraceful circumſtance was made known to the inhabitants, who fearful of attacking him laid wait for him all night, and were probably forming ſome ſtratagem, or ſending for ſome re-inforcements, in order in the morning to aſſault, or enſnare, and kill him. But at midnight, perhaps awakened by remorſe of conſcience, he aroſe; and the Lord, though offended "wrought for his own name's "ſake;" and by his aſſiſtance, in contempt of the guards, he ſeized upon the gate, with the poſt, and bars, and all, and carried them ſeveral miles to the top of an hill, no one venturing to interrupt, or ſeize him. This reminds us of him, who in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, was crucified betwixt two thieves: but he aroſe as a conqueror over death, and every foe, and, as it were, broke open and carried away with him the very gates of the grave, whilſt he aſcended into heaven as the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection.

V. 4. *Whoſe name was Delilah.*] Delilah ſignifies "a conſumer." It is not certain whether ſhe were a Philiſtine, or a licentious Iſraelite. But Samſon indulged a baſe affection for her, and waſted his time in her company in a moſt ſhameful manner: perhaps emboldened by his impunity, in the foregoing inſtance.

V. 5. *The lords of*, &c.] The princes of their five

ſee wherein his great ſtrength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail againſt him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of ſilver.

6 And Delilah ſaid to Samſon, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great ſtrength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mighteſt be bound to afflict thee.

7 And Samſon ſaid unto her, If they bind me with ſeven green withs that were never dried, then ſhall I be weak, and be as another man.

8 Then the lords of the Philiſtines brought up to her ſeven green withs which had not been dried, and ſhe bound him with them.

9 (Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber.) And ſhe ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his ſtrength was not known.

10 And Delilah ſaid unto Samſon, Behold, thou haſt mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mighteſt be bound.

11 And he ſaid unto her, If they bind me faſt with new ropes that never were occupied, then ſhall I be weak, and be as another man.

12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah ſaid unto Samſon, Hitherto thou haſt mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mighteſt be bound. And he ſaid unto her, If thou weaveſt the ſeven locks of my head with the web.

14 And ſhe faſtened *it* with a pin, and ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And he awaked out of his ſleep, and went away with the pin of the beam and with the web.

15 And ſhe ſaid unto him, How canſt thou ſay, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me; thou haſt mocked me theſe three times, and haſt not told me wherein thy great ſtrength *lieth*.

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chief cities, ſoon heard of Samſon's conduct, and formed their plan for his ruin: by promiſing Delilah about ſix hundred pounds ſterling, they induced her to employ all her inſinuation to find out the cauſe of his ſupernatural ſtrength, which they ſuppoſed to depend on ſome obſervance, that he might be induced to neglect; upon which his ſtrength failing him, they might avenge themſelves upon him. It ſeems that their terror of him was ſo great, that they durſt not upon any advantage, attempt any thing againſt him, till they were ſatisfied that his great ſtrength was departed from him. However the hand of God, in reſtraining them from killing him, when he was aſleep in the chamber with them, and when one was employed in ſhaving his head, is very viſible and ſurpriſing.

V. 6, 7. *Tell me*, &c.] We may be ſure that this artful woman would propoſe this as a mere curious queſtion; that ſhe would couch it in ſuch terms, accompany it with ſuch blandiſhments, and urge it at ſuch times, as were moſt likely to prevail. Yet Samſon had ſome ſuſpicion that it was with no good deſign, that ſhe deſired to pry into this important ſecret; but inſtead of leaving her, or giving her a direct refuſal, he endeavoured to amuſe her by an evaſive anſwer. He knew that his ſtrength was immediately from God, who had conſtituted him a perpetual Nazarite, of which his hair was the token: but if he renounced his Nazarite's character, by ſhaving his head, the Lord would depart from him, and he would become as other men. He was not at firſt ſo infatuated, as to diſcloſe the ſecret: but he was taken in ſatan's net, and was ſure to become every moment more, and more entangled.

V. 9. *Now there were*, &c.] Samſon's infatuation was very great: but we cannot conceive that he would have fallen aſleep again, and again in Delilah's lap, if he had ſeen the Philiſtines in the chamber prepared to ſeize him. We may ſuppoſe, that they waited every time to ſee, whether he were able to break his bonds, before they quitted their concealment: and that when they found that his ſtrength was not departed, they kept cloſe: and that Delilah artfully turned the matter off, as a jeſt, which ſhe put upon him to diſcover, whether he had told her the truth, or not.

V. 14. *And ſhe faſtened*, &c.] Theſe repeated attempts would have ſatisfied him, that ſhe intended his ruin, had not whoredom taken away his heart, and made him ſenſeleſs, and brutiſh.—Every ſtep brought him nearer to the fatal diſcovery, and cataſtrophe.

V, 15. *When thine heart is not with me*, &c.] Delilah pretended to diſcredit all his profeſſions of love for her, ſo long as he refuſed to give her this peculiar proof of it. He had ſacrificed his honour, conſcience, intereſt, and every other valuable object to his paſſion for her: but whilſt he had one reſerve, ſhe would not be ſatisfied. Such abſolute affection cannot be placed upon any creature without idolatry: but it is that very love, which the Lord juſtly requires of us, when he bids us to give him our heart: nor will he accept of us, whilſt there is one reſerve: whilſt we deliberately refuſe to part with one worldly object for his ſake; or to yield him any ſervice, which he requires at our hands. Had Abraham peremptorily refuſed to facri-

16 And

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him *so* that his soul was vexed unto death:

17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once; for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and brought money in their hand.

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees: and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20 And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22 Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again, after he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together, for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

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fice his beloved Isaac, the Lord might have said, "how "canst thou say, that thou lovest me, when thy heart is "not with me!" For the true love of the infinitely glorious God swallows up, regulates, or subordinates every other affection; and is itself alone *absolute* or *unreserved*.

V. 16. *Vexed unto death.*] What an infatuation was this, that when he was thus incessantly and intolerably teased to do so foolish, and wicked an action, he had not resolution to depart from her!

V. 19—21. *She made him sleep*, &c.] It seems that Delilah bound him in his sleep, as it is said, that "she "began to afflict him." By which the Philistines being satisfied, that his strength was departed from him, they ventured from their concealment, seized upon their prey, and having put out his eyes, preserved him as a monument of their victory, and made him drudge in hard labour. To all which he could make no effectual resistance, for he found that the Lord was departed from him. What a change was this? To what wretched, and disgraceful situation had sin reduced this mighty judge of Israel, who was before himself as a whole army of men! Had his head been shaven without his fault, the case would have been different: But his whole conduct had been as great a contempt of the Lord's favour, glory, and authority; as if he had in disdain cut off his Nazarite's hair with his own hands: and therefore he was constrained to endure the dreadful effects of his folly. Thus men proceed in sin, till they are given up of God, and fast bound in satan's fetters, and drudge on in his service. Thus believers, growing negligent, and self-indulgent, grieve the Spirit of God, lose their strength, and are taken captive by this enemy. The Lord generally rebukes and chastens them for their first offences: but to teach them all whither their deviations tend, and to what their recoveries are owing, he permits a few to wander wider, and sink deeper; and yet recovers them at last; and marking his displeasure in their most severe temporal sufferings, preserves them from sinking into the pit of destruction. These examples hypocrites will abuse, and Pharisees revile, and infidels deride, to their own more fearful punishment: but true Christians will be thereby rendered more humble, watchful, and circumspect; more simple in their dependance on the Lord, more fervent in prayer to be kept, and praise for being preserved, from falling; and if they fall, they will by them be secured from sinking into despair. Such an example was Samson, and this is the real interpretation of the riddle of his character.

V. 22. *The hair of*, &c.] Without doubt Samson's afflictions were the means of bringing him to deep repentance: by the loss of his bodily sight the eyes of his understanding were opened to perceive his own madness, and wickedness; and, by depriving him of his bodily strength, the Lord was pleased to renew his spiritual strength. Then would he humble himself before the Lord, and seek his merciful forgiveness, and not seek it in vain. In token of his reconciliation, his hair grew probably much faster than is usual; which was an indication that the Spirit of the Lord was returning unto him, and that he would recover his extraordinary strength. But the Philistines having blinded, and fettered him, were under no further apprehensions on that account.

V. 23, 24.] This was either some occasional feast for their victory over Samson, or some annual festival, that was observed on that account with the greater solemnity, in honour of Dagon. When they had offered their sacrifice, they met together to feast, and to divert themselves, either in the temple of Dagon, or as some think in a theatre erected for that purpose. On this occasion the

25 And

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport. And they set him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women: and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God! remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

Philistines renewed their triumphs over Samson, who probably had been preserved for that purpose; and also presumed to celebrate the triumph of Dagon their god, over Jehovah the God of Israel: (*Dan.* c. v. ver. 1—5:) as if by his help they had prevailed against the judge of Israel, who formerly by the help of the Lord had been victorious over them.

V. 25. *Made them sport*, &c.] They diverted themselves by insulting over his abject situation, exercising their cruel ingenuity in making him appear contemptible, and ridiculous. Thus Christ being apprehended, and bound by his enemies, was insulted by the council, the servants, and the soldiers.

V. 26. *The pillars*, &c.] The main weight of the building rested upon two pillars in the centre, very near together, according to the method of building made use of in some parts of the world; against which Samson, as if wearied, desired leave to rest himself.

V. 27. *All the lords*, &c.] All the principal persons of the nation, were within this building, whilst about three thousand others were upon the flat roof, looking through apertures made for that purpose, to enjoy the cruel pleasure of insulting over their fallen enemy.

V. 28. *And Samson called*, &c.] The triumph of the Philistines was the triumph of Dagon: but the cause of Samson was the cause of Israel, and of God. He was the judge of Israel, appointed of God to be an avenger of their enemies; and for his transgression he had been justly delivered into their hands, and they had not only cruelly treated him, but impiously blasphemed God. As in ordinary cases we may hope for the conversion, and salvation of any of our fellow-sinners, so we are commanded to forgive, do good to, and pray for every one of them: and such extraordinary cases are not recorded for our imitation, though the persons concerned did what was in their case right, and were influenced by the Spirit of God. For the same reason that satan, and his angels, being the incurable enemies of God, are the objects of our allowed abhorrence; we should be required to detest any individual on earth, whom we certainly knew to be the object of God's final hatred: and in a future state, when sinners will no longer be under a dispensation of mercy, we shall rejoice in the destruction of all the enemies of God. (2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 14. *Rev.* c. vi. v. 10.) Samson's prayer was both dictated, and answered of God; nor could the knowledge of it have been attained, but by revelation. And in his extraordinary case he knew, that it was right that he should avenge the cause of God, and Israel, and that he should desire to execute the vengeance of God upon them, for their despiteful cruelty to him. Nor is he to be accused of self-murder: he sought not his own death, but Israel's deliverance, and the destruction of their enemiss: and there is no intimation, that he was impatient under his sufferings; though in accomplishing his purpose, he was willing to lay down his life with them. There is a vast difference betwixt rushing uncalled into the presence of God, out of proud impatience, rebellion, and contempt of life, when it is made miserable by a man's own misconduct; and being willing to lay down life for the honour of God, and the welfare of his people; though the circumstances, into which a man adventures be as certainly fatal, as the means by which a man murders himself: for a man is no more deemed a self-murderer, who sacrifices his life for the good of his country in the field of battle; than he is deemed a murderer of others, who in a just war slays the enemies of his country.

V. 30.] The numbers within, and upon the building would *naturally* occasion much slaughter amongst them: but we must ascribe to the same power, which enabled Samson to throw down the building, the decisive destruction, which it caused. Thus Samson died in bonds, and amongst the Philistines, as an awful rebuke for his sins: but he died penitent, and had not his future portion with them: and the effects of his death typified those of the death of Christ, who, by voluntarily laying down his life amongst transgressors, subverted the foundations of satan's kingdom, and provided for the deliverance of his people. By this blow the princes of the Philistines were destroyed, their government was unhinged, their power crushed, and their courage daunted; so that they made no opposition to Samson's relations, when they went to fetch his body, to be buried amongst his people. Thus the body of Christ also was, without opposition, given to his friends, that it might be honourably interred. Samson signifies "a little sun;" according to this allusion, he arose upon Israel after a suit-

31 Then his brethren, and all the houſe of his father, came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eſhtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Iſrael twenty years.

able pre-intimation to his parents, and during the morning of his life he ſhone very bright: but towards the evening he was greatly obſcured by clouds; yet when ſetting he burſt through the gloom, and ſhone with more ſplendour than ever. So Jeſus, our long-expected ſun of righteouſneſs, aroſe upon Iſrael, and upon the earth; after ſhining with glorious, and benign luſtre during his life, he was obſcured by the thickeſt clouds juſt before his ſetting: but when he cried out "it is finiſhed," and gave up the ghoſt, he ſhone forth with mild but moſt glorious ſplendour, and died a triumphant conqueror. But he differed from Samſon; in that he died praying for his murderers, and aroſe again to complete the redemption of his people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing, except our evident duty, ſhould ever prevail with us to venture into thoſe places, where bad examples, and licentious characters abound. Even in that caſe, we ſhould go with fear, and trembling, and earneſtly begging of God to turn away our eyes from beholding, and to preſerve our hearts from conceiving vanity, and to ſtrengthen us to reſiſt every temptation. For when we become unwatchful, and ſelf-confident, we are near ſome humiliating fall; the roving eye readily admits the licentious deſire into the heedleſs heart; and luſt being conceived, ſin is brought forth, and miſery is the conſequence. Even they, who have grown old in an honourable profeſſion of godlineſs, are no longer ſafe, than they are kept humble: and ſinful propenſities, which have long lain dormant, will revive under ſuitable temptations, and acquire their former aſcendancy, and even domineer more than ever, if we provoke God to leave us to ourſelves. The blandiſhments of beautiful women have proved dreadful weapons againſt the church of God. (*Prov.* c. ii. v. 16—19. c. v. ver. 3—14. 22, 23. c. vii. v. 26, 27:) And ſatan would rather ſee the active, and uſeful ſervant of God, yielding to the enticements of an harlot, and ſleeping in Delilah's lap; than boldly venturing the tyrant's rage, and yielding up himſelf to be caſt into the fiery furnace. They, who are captivated in this manner, are ſpeedily expoſed to the deepeſt ſhame, and the moſt imminent danger; their reputation, ſtrength, and uſefulneſs will be torn from them; the cauſe, which they ſhould ſerve, will be betrayed by them, and their enemies will be hardened in their triumphs over them, and the religion, which they profeſs. The *outward* peril, which attends ſuch forbidden intercourſe, is generally ſo great, that nothing but blind infatuation can induce men to venture upon it: but who can tell the machinations of the powers of darkneſs againſt thoſe, who are ſtupidly indulging their luſts, and ſleeping in the very jaws of deſtruction? It muſt be aſcribed to the Lord's unſpeakable goodneſs if any eſcape, who are once taken in theſe ſnares. But lamentable is it to conſider, that this goodneſs is ſo generally abuſed into an encouragement to further crimes; for every ſinful propenſity is ſtrengthened by indulgence. Even true believers are ſeldom duly humbled for their ſins, till they taſte the bitter effects of them; and therefore it is eventually better to be chaſtened for our firſt offences, than to eſcape with impunity. Companions in iniquity can have no good reaſons for truſting one another. And they, who betray the cauſe of God, can expect no other, than to be betrayed by their fellow-creatures; for they who are enſlaved to one luſt, need not wonder to find their companions under the dominion of another. Unworthy of a man, and ſtill more of a believer is that love, which is placed on a worthleſs object, on account of external embelliſhments, and for the ſake of animal gratification, whilſt conſcience, honour, and every noble purpoſe of the ſoul, are ſacrificed thereto. When a man is thus bound in the chain of his own luſts, he ſeems to loſe even common ſenſe; and no wickedneſs in the object of his idolatrous affections can make him ſenſible of his folly and danger, or willing to renounce the baſe attachment. This is indeed a deep ditch, into which many great men, and even ſome good men have fallen; but from which few have eſcaped, and they by a miracle of mercy, and with the loſs of almoſt every thing, except their precious ſouls. Whatever a man hath already ſacrificed to ſuch a criminal paſſion, ſtill more will be required; no denial will be taken, no bounds aſſigned, or end fixed to artful, and intereſted importunity, until a man has ruined himſelf and all thoſe, who are, or ought to be dear to him; for aſſiduity, diſſimulation, and inceſſant blandiſhment will overcome the ſtrongeſt reſolutions, and teaſe a man into compliance with the moſt unreaſonable, and ruinous demands: and all counſels, warnings, and paſt experiences are in this caſe ineffectual. On this Delilah's lap thouſands ſleep ſo ſound, that nothing but the flames of hell can awake them. And though the Lord again, and again deliver his people, even when they grieve his Spirit by their ſins; yet if they preſume upon his goodneſs, he will ſeverely puniſh them, and even make them the contempt, and reproach of the fooliſh; he will tear from them all their earthly comforts, and fill their ſouls with the moſt exquiſite anguiſh; and, without ſending them to hell, he can make their ſufferings ten thouſand times greater than all the pleaſures of their ſins. Nay he can cloud the characters of the moſt eminent of his ſervants with ſo dark a veil, that the people of God ſhall be ready to conſider them as hypocrites, and apoſtates. Thus he will ſet them up as a beacon to warn others of the rocks on which they ſplit. And though many will, by their falls and miſeries, be taught to watch and pray againſt temptation; yet they will be oppreſſed by the painful reflexion, that multitudes will by their crimes be prejudiced, and hardened in infidelity, and ungodlineſs to their everlaſting deſtruction. Out of this horrible pit none can eſcape, but by deep humiliation for ſin, earneſt cries for mercy, patient ſubmiſſion to correction, and renewed converſion unto God through Jeſus Chriſt. Their heavieſt ſorrows when they have theſe effects will prove moſt precious favours, their comfort, and ſtrength ſhall be renewed, and their cruel enemies ſhall finally be diſappointed. Yet even in this caſe the chaſtening rod may purſue them to the grave. When ſuch perſons have obtained pardon, and hope to die in peace, and go to glory; they can deſire to

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, Micah an Ephraimite, 1ſt. Setting up idolatry in his houſe, v. 1—6. 2d. Obtaining a Levite to be his prieſt, v. 7—13.

AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whoſe name *was* Micah.

2 And he ſaid unto his mother, The eleven hundred *ſhekels* of ſilver, that were taken from thee, about which thou curſedſt, and ſpakeſt of alſo in mine ears; behold, the ſilver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother ſaid, Bleſſed *be thou* of the LORD, my ſon.

3 And when he had reſtored the eleven hundred *ſhekels* of ſilver to his mother, his mother ſaid, I had wholly dedicated the ſilver unto the LORD from my hand for my ſon, to make a graven image, and a molten image; now therefore I will reſtore it unto thee.

4 Yet he reſtored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *ſhekels* of ſilver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image: and they were in the houſe of Micah.

5 And the man Micah had an houſe of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and conſecrated one of his ſons, who became his prieſt.

6 In thoſe days *there was* no king in Iſrael, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

7 And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he ſojourned there.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah, to ſojourn where he could find *a place:* and he came to mount

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live for no other purpoſe, but to wipe off, if poſſible, the blot, which they have caſt upon the goſpel, and to take vengeance, (ſo to ſpeak,) upon ſatan and his cauſe, for the injury, they have ſuſtained; and with their dying lips, or in their dying moments to render ſome ſervice to the church of God: and ſome who have diſgraced the goſpel, and rejoiced the hearts of it's enemies, have afterwards been ſo deeply humbled, and have cloſed their lives in ſuch a manner, as hath more than counterbalanced all, and turned the triumphings of wicked men into confuſion. Indeed all ſucceſsful villainy will ſoon be puniſhed; and they who hate, betray, and perſecute the church of God, or any of it's members, have not only the prayers of God's people, but the interceſſion of Chriſt himſelf againſt them, whilſt they continue impenitent: how then can they eſcape deſtruction? Vain is our expectation of protection, or aſſiſtance from God, when we are committing deliberate ſin: we may think to go forth as at other times, but ſhall find that our locks are ſhorn, and our ſtrength is gone. Nay, if miniſters, with unrepented guilt upon their conſcience, continue to preach, pray, and adminiſter the ſacraments, their exertions will fail of their wanted efficacy; and as the Lord is departed from them, ſatan will diſregard their feeble efforts. But it is moſt lamentable, when they alone are not ſenſible of the awful change: what can then be expected, but that the enemy will blind, and enſlave them more and more to his baſeſt drudgery! May God help us to walk humbly, and watchfully, to abſtain from fleſhly luſts, and avoid the beginnings of evil; and to beware of the ſubtlety of ſatan, and his agents, and the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts. May our unreſerved love and entire dependance be placed upon the divine Saviour. He conquered by dying, and roſe to triumph: by his power all his true people ſhall conquer, and triumph alſo. Here they muſt live mingled with the wicked, and die *outwardly* in the ſame manner; but they have a friend to receive their departing ſouls; and a place in heaven prepared for them. Their bodies, may or may not be buried together; but they ſhall certainly be ſeparated at the reſurrection of the dead; the one ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, the other into life eternal. May we then chooſe this good part, which ſhall never be taken from us!

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *And there was*, &c.] Samſon was the laſt judge before Eli, as is generally agreed, and the events recorded in the enſuing chapters were coincident with the preceding hiſtory; and took place, not many years after the death of Joſhua.

V. 2—4.] Micah's mother, having loſt her money, in a rage imprecated the divine vengeance upon the thief, if he did not reſtore it, pretending that it was devoted to God, by a ſolemn vow. Her ſon, who had ſtole it, was by this curſe affrighted to diſcloſe the theft, and reſtore the money; and thus he obtained her bleſſing, ſuch as it was: in conſequence two hundred ſhekels were expended in making an image, and perhaps the remainder in the preparation for its worſhip.

V. 5. *An houſe of gods*, &c.] Or "of God;" for it is probable that he purpoſed to worſhip the God of Iſrael, and he ignorantly imagined, that in this manner, having appointed his ſon to be prieſt, he might ſerve God as acceptably, as by going up to the tabernacle.

V. 6. *There was*, &c.] Either there was no judge at that time, or he poſſeſſed not that authority, which was requiſite for repreſſing idolatry, as a king might have done. Probably the judges, when they had performed thoſe ſervices, for which they were raiſed up, were not much regarded in the diſtant parts of the land, by a people, who were always prone to return to their idols.

V. 7. *Of the family of Judah*, &c.] His father was a Levite, but by marriage allied to the tribe of Judah, in whoſe lot Bethlehem lay. We cannot ſuppoſe a Levite was conſtrained for mere want, to ramble like a vagabond:

Ephraim, to the houſe of Micah, as he journeyed.

9 And Micah ſaid unto him, Whence comeſt thou? And he ſaid unto him, I *am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to ſojourn where I may find *a place*.

10 And Micah ſaid unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a prieſt, and I will give thee ten *ſhekels* of ſilver by the year, and a ſuit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his ſons.

12 And Micah conſecrated the Levite; and the young man became his prieſt, and was in the houſe of Micah.

13 Then ſaid Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, ſeeing I have a Levite to *my* prieſt.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The ſpies of the Danites employing Micah's prieſt to conſult the Lord for them, v. 1—6. 2d. The ſpies ſearching out Laiſh, making their report to their brethren, who marched towards Laiſh, and robbed Micah of his image, and his prieſt, &c. v. 7—26. 3d. Their conqueſt of Laiſh, and their eſtabliſhment of idolatry, v. 27—31.

IN thoſe days *there was* no king in Iſrael: and in thoſe days the tribe of the Danites ſought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Iſrael.

2 And the children of Dan ſent of their family five men from their coaſts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eſhtaol, to ſpy out the land, and to ſearch it; and they ſaid unto them, Go, ſearch the land: who, when they came to mount Ephraim, to the houſe of Micah, they lodged there.

3 When they *were* by the houſe of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and ſaid unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makeſt thou in this *place?* and what haſt thou here?

4 And he ſaid unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his prieſt.

5 And they ſaid unto him, Aſk counſel, we

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this man was probably of an unſettled diſpoſition, and did not love to be under the controul of the prieſts: rather than be their ſervant, he would be the prieſt of an idol, at very low wages.

V. 13. *Now I know*, &c.] Micah was conſcious that the prieſthood of his ſon was *informal*; but fooliſhly fancied that he had now mended the matter. Whereas a Levite had no right to officiate as prieſt, nor had *he* any authority to conſecrate him; and to his other crimes he added that of tempting a Levite to idolatry.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Old age will never cure the heart of it's love of worldly objects, and when men have loſt their reliſh for other ſinful indulgences, the love of money frequently acquires double force: but every idol, is liable to be torn from them, and their inordinate love of it, will increaſe their grief and reſentment for the loſs of it. The curſe cauſeleſs will only hurt the perſon, who vents it; yet when children rob their parents, they may expect from them a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing, and in conſequence the diſpleaſure of God, (*Prov.* c. xxviii. v. 24.) Confeſſion, and reſtitution, though attendants on true repentance, do not always imply it's preſence: (*Matt.* c. xxvii. v. 3—5. Thoſe parents cannot reaſonably expect their children to do their duty to them, who have neither by their inſtructions or example taught them their duty to God, but have been their tempters to ungodlineſs. Riches are ſeldom made a good uſe of: in one form or other they are commonly idolized, either in themſelves, or in thoſe idols, which proud, and ſenſual men purchaſe with them. Men naturally love their own inventions in religion, being more flattering to their pride, and more indulgent to their ſloth and luſts, than God's appointments: and the liberality of ſuperſtitious people, often ſhames the niggardlineſs of the profeſſors of true religion. They, who once deviate from the rule of God's word, will wander ſtill more widely, and bewilder themſelves more entirely: and will preſumptuouſly expect a reward from God, for the very practices, which he abhors. When pride, an unſettled temper, ignorance, and ſloth meet in thoſe ordained to the miniſtry, with poverty, or extravagance; by the proſpect of ſecular advantage, they may be induced to patronize crimes, and become ringleaders in tranſgreſſion; whilſt their example, and concurrence give a *quietus* to every remaining ſcruple in the conſciences of others. Many wealthy people love to have *ſuch Levites* for *their prieſts*; becauſe, inſtead of reproving their ſins, they embolden them therein; and induce them, to conclude, that there is no reality at all in religion, as it's miniſters are ſo mercenary, and ungodly.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *All their inheritance*, &c.] In the diviſion of the land the city Laiſh, or Leſhem (*Joſh.* c. xix. v. 47, 48.) had been aſſigned to the Danites, beſides their portion near the lot of Judah; but as it lay in the northern extremity of the country, they had not attempted to poſſeſs it, till they were conſtrained for want of room to ſeek new ſettlements.

V. 5, 6.] The Danites had not conſulted the Lord by pray

pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go ſhall be proſperous.

6 And the prieſt ſaid unto them, Go in peace; before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go.

7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laiſh, and ſaw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careleſs, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and ſecure; and *there was* no magiſtrate in the land, that might put *them* to ſhame in *any* thing: and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no buſineſs with *any* man.

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eſhtaol: and their brethren ſaid unto them, What *ſay* ye?

9 And they ſaid, Ariſe, that we may go up againſt them: for we have ſeen the land, and, behold, it *is* very good; and *are* ye ſtill? be not ſlothful to go, *and* to enter to poſſeſs the land.

10 When ye go, ye ſhall come unto a people ſecure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.

11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eſhtaol, ſix hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day; behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-jearim.

13 And they paſſed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the houſe of Micah.

14 Then anſwered the five men that went to ſpy out the country of Laiſh, and ſaid unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in theſe houſes an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore conſider what ye have to do.

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the houſe of the young man the Levite, *even* unto the houſe of Micah, and ſaluted him.

16 And the ſix hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan, ſtood by the entering of the gate.

17 And the five men that went to ſpy out the land went up, *and* came in thither, *and* took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the prieſt ſtood in the entering of the gate with the ſix hundred men *that were* appointed with weapons of war.

18 And theſe went into Micah's houſe, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then ſaid the prieſt unto them, What do ye?

19 And they ſaid unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a prieſt: *is it* better for thee to be a prieſt unto the houſe of one man, or that thou be a prieſt unto a tribe and a family in Iſrael?

20 And the prieſt's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midſt of the people.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them.

22 *And* when they were a good way from the houſe of Micah, the men that *were* in the

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his high prieſt about their intended enterpriſe: but when their ſpies met with this Levite, whom they had known in his former rambles, and were informed by him that he was become a prieſt, they bethought themſelves of conſulting the Lord by him: in which their ignorance and inattention were proved to be lamentably great. The Levite having gone through his form, anſwered them according to their inclinations, which being verified by the event, raiſed the reputation of the oracle, and ſanctioned the idolatry. Thus fortune-tellers, and monthly prognoſticators, ſometimes happening to conjecture right, all their blunders are forgotten, and theſe *random lucky gueſſes* raiſe their credit with the ignorant, and credulous. But in this manner God ſends men a ſtrong deluſion to believe a lie, who ſeek information in a way prohibited in the ſacred Scriptures.

V. 7. *They dwelt careleſs*, &c.] The Iſraelites had ſo neglected to proſecute their victories, that the Canaanites deſpiſed them: and this people living, unmoleſted in a plentiful country, had no magiſtrates, and were not ſecured by walls, troops, or alliances, but every one lived according to his own inclination, without either fear or ſhame.

V. 11. *Six hundred men*, &c.] So ſmall a company out of this large tribe, (*Numb.* c. xxvi. v. 43,) unaſſiſted by their brethren, marching upon this enterprize, manifeſted how regardleſs the Iſraelites were of the public cauſe, and how intent they were upon their perſonal indulgence. Yet

houſes near to Micah's houſe were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

23 And they cried unto the children of Dan: and they turned their faces, and ſaid unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comeſt with ſuch a company?

24 And he ſaid, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the prieſt, and ye are gone away; and what have I more? and what *is* this *that* ye ſay unto me, What aileth thee?

25 And the children of Dan ſaid unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, leſt angry fellows run upon thee, and thou loſe thy life, with the lives of thy houſehold.

26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah ſaw that they *were* too ſtrong for him, he turned and went back unto his houſe.

27 And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the prieſt which he had, and came unto Laiſh, unto a people *that were* at quiet and ſecure: and they ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, and burnt the city with fire.

28 And *there was* no deliverer, becauſe it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no buſineſs with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Beth-rehob: and they built a city, and dwelt therein.

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Iſrael: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laiſh at the firſt.

30 And the children of Dan ſet up the graven image: and Jonathan, the ſon of Gerſhon, the ſon of Manaſſeh, he and his ſons were prieſts to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

31 And they ſet them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the houſe of God was in Shiloh.

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this ſmall troop, in confidence of ſucceſs, took their families with them. Mahaneh-dan ſignifies the camp of Dan.

V. 24. *And what have I more?* &c.] Micah, though ignorant and immoral, yet deemed his religion his chief treaſure; and therefore when they had taken that from him, wherein he had gloried, and on account of which he was confident, that the Lord would do him good, he counted himſelf to have loſt all, and intimated that they might as well have taken all the reſt of his ſubſtance too. Whatever a man thus values, and confides in, and ſuppoſes he cannot live, and be happy in the want of, is his idol, and occupies God's throne in his heart: and he will ere long have to exclaim, "My gods are gone, and what have I more?" Had the Danites deſtroyed Micah's idols, and made an example of the Levite, it might have been juſtifiable: but their conduct was equally a robbery of God, and man. They coveted this ready made religion, and this upſtart prieſt, and oracle, which had ſuddenly riſen into reputation; and they thought the *piety* of the end, would juſtify the violence of the means, which they employed to accompliſh it. And indeed it was a very proper beginning of ſo vile an apoſtacy. The captivity afterwards mentioned was that of the ark, by the Philiſtines, in the early days of Samuel; for it may be ſuppoſed that Samuel and David repreſſed all open idolatry in the land; but it continued all the years of the judges, till the ark was removed from Shiloh. Afterwards Jeroboam ſet up the worſhip of the golden calf in this very city.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If men were as ſenſibly affected with the wants of their ſouls, as they are with thoſe of the body, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, though diſtant, and future, would not be neglected; and the labour, danger, and ſelf-denial, which lie in the way would no longer affright, or deter them from ſeeking it. Whatever valour, wiſdom, or diligence we employ in any undertaking, we ſhall not be really ſucceſsful, if we forget to conſult the Lord, and ſeek his aſſiſtance, and bleſſing; nor are they fit to ſpy out the good land for others, who begin not in this manner. Men will generally find out thoſe of their own character in every place; and an ignorant, and erroneous conſcience will meet with ſome ſuperſtition or falſe religion, apparently coined on purpoſe for it. Succeſs proves not our undertakings to be pleaſing to God, any more than a fortunate conjecture proves a man a prophet: for the former is ſometimes ſent as a curſe upon the ſoul: and the latter is permitted to puniſh thoſe, who deſpiſe, and hate the truth. We ought to be thankful for good government; and for magiſtrates, who put men to ſhame for their crimes; without which they can ſcarce be prevented from deſtroying each other. The bleſſings alſo of liberty, and proſperity call for gratitude: yet when they produce ſloth, ſelf-indulgence, and carnal ſecurity, they indicate approaching deſtruction. Wordly men finding "no want of any thing, "that is in the earth," conſider not the diſadvantages, they lie under, in reſpect of their ſouls: for if their ſituations, or occupations conſiſt not with true religion, they can either do without any, or frame one ſuited to their conveniency. If men are deſtitute of the fear of God, they will ſeize upon whatever they covet, when they poſſeſs power, and can do it with impunity: and juſtice, gratitude, and the rights of hoſpitality form but feeble barriers in their way. Indeed, injuſtice and idolatry conſiſt well with each other; for ſatan loves, though God hates "rob-"bery for burnt-offering." They who do wrong, are commonly much offended, if the injured party dares to complain, or remonſtrate; and thus theft is frequently an

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. A Levite's concubine committing adultery, and returning to her father; his going to take her back, and kindly entertained by her father, v. 1—9. 2d. Their late departure, lodging at Gibeah, and the shameful behaviour of the inhabitants, which ended in the woman's death, v. 10—28. 3d. The Levite's conduct upon that occasion, v. 29, 30.

AND it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah.

2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months.

3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house; and, when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

4 And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.

5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.

6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry.

7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father-in-law urged him; therefore he lodged there again.

8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them.

9 And when the man rose up to depart he

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introduction to murder, through the joint influence of avarice, pride, and malice. But they, who rob God of his glory, and tempt others to iniquity, deserve to be plundered by their fellow-creatures; and they, who trust in unprincipled persons need not wonder, if they are deceived. Mercenary priests will go very disgraceful lengths to obtain preferment, and even set their services to sale to the highest bidder. But whilst they eagerly seize upon the proposed advantage, let them remember, that they are increasing guilt, shame, mischief, and condemnation. When the removal of idols weans the heart from idolatry, the anguish of parting will be made up by the consequent advantage: but wretched are they, who are deprived of their idols, and left under the power of the idolatrous affection! Thus death will rend men from all those worldly objects, on which they have placed their affections: their gods will be for ever gone, and what have they more? But the case of self-confident hypocrites, when disappointed of all their towering hopes, will be peculiarly dreadful! Happy they, who renounce all for Christ, and in him have the Lord for their God! no enemies or changes can take their portion, or the comfort of it from them. If we would have this felicity, we must carefully attend to the word, and ordinances of God, and be afraid of every deviation from our perfect rule: "for behold how great a matter a "little fire kindleth."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1. *In those days*, &c.] This happened whilst Phinehas the son of Eleazar was High Priest, and therefore not very long after the death of Joshua: (c. xx. v. 28.) There was then no king in Israel, nor any judge, who exercised authority over the people in general; and

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the want of a regular civil government produced many fatal effects. This should teach us thankfully to receive the benefits, and patiently to submit to the real, or imaginary inconveniencies of that government, which the Providence of God hath placed over us. In this, and the following chapters we have a most shocking history, which not only gives us a melancholy view of the state of matters in Israel, at so early a period; but a very humiliating picture of the desperate wickedness of the human heart; and a very instructive lesson concerning the fatal effects of sin.

V. 2. *His concubine*, &c.] (*Note, Gen.* c. xxv. v. 6.) This woman seems to have been the Levite's only wife, and was called his concubine, because not admitted to all the privileges of that relation: but her father is called his father-in-law, and he is called her husband. (c. xx. v. 4.) Only this Levite, and that worthless one, of whom we read in the foregoing chapters, are mentioned in the book of Judges: the one of which proved the guilty cause of establishing idolatry; and the concubine of the other, the occasion of the almost total destruction of a tribe in Israel.

V. 3. *Speak friendly*, &c.] By this expression we may hope that this woman was penitent, and cast down under the sense of her guilt, and afraid of being made a public example: which the Levite thus compassionately obviated. It is generally thought that her father was faulty in entertaining her, when she left her husband; and that she had been improperly indulged by him: but it is more plain, that she was not a proper wife for a Levite; and probably his affection for her was inordinate, and his choice imprudent, being chiefly on account of her beauty, which seems to have attracted the inhabitants of Gibeah, when they re-

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and his concubine, and his servant, his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold now, the day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home.

10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, (which *is* Jerusalem,) and *there were* with him two asses saddled; his concubine also *was* with him.

11 *And* when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it.

12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that *is* not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.

13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah.

14 And they passed on, and went their way, and the sun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah which *belongeth* to Benjamin.

15 And they turned aside thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and, when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city; for *there was* no man that took them into his house to lodging.

16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjamites.

17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a way-faring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?

18 And he said unto him, We *are* passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I *am now* going to the house of the LORD; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to house.

19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is* no want of any thing.

20 And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee: howsoever, *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the street.

21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

22 *Now* as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, *and* beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.

24 Behold, *here is* my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine, them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.

25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring they let her go.

26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, till it was light.

27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the threshold.

28 And

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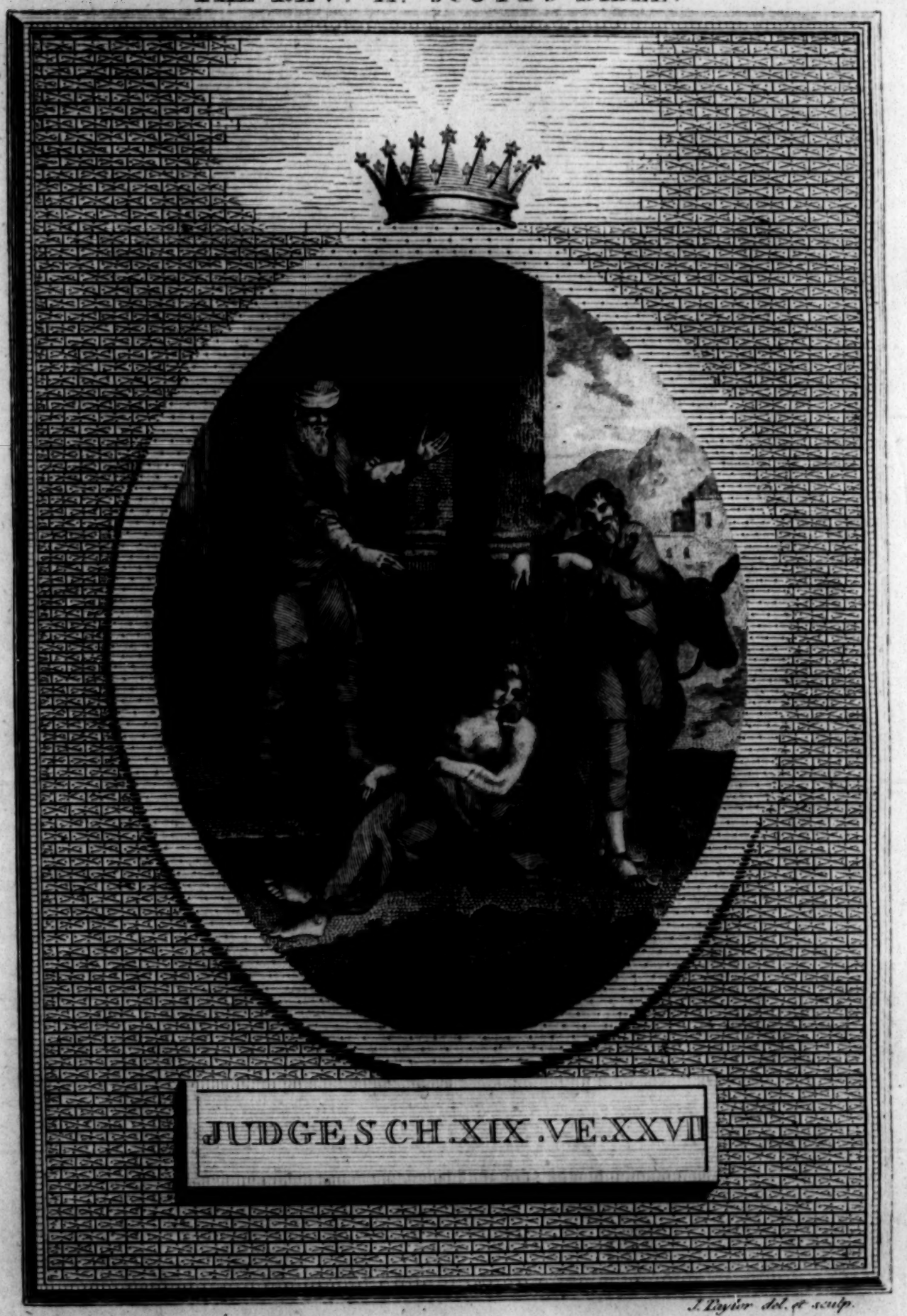
jected the offer of the Ephraimite's daughter, (v. 25.) In other respects the Levite's character seems to have been consistent with his profession.

V. 18. *To the house of the Lord*, &c.] At Shiloh, which was near his habitation in mount Ephraim: either his employment as a Levite required his attendance, or he purposed to offer sacrifices, according to the circumstances of his family, before he returned home. His conduct in refusing to contract familiarity with the inhabitants of the land, was a very proper, and seasonable example, and protest against the general disobedience of the Israelites in that respect.

V. 22—24.] (*Gen.* c. xix. v. 4—9.)



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28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going: but none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.

29 And when he was come into his house he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.

30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The Levite's cause heard in a convention of Israel; their determination to avenge his quarrel; their demand from the Benjamites to deliver up the inhabitants of Gibeah; who refused to do it and prepared for war, 1—17. 2d. The Israelites defeated in two battles with great loss, 18—25. 3d. Their success after having been humbled before the Lord; and the almost total extirpation of the Benjamites, 26—48.

THEN

V. 29, 30.] It had an inhuman appearance thus to mangle the dead corpse of this unhappy woman: but it was intended to excite a more general attention, and a keener resentment against so horrible a crime, which called for as tremendous a punishment. The justice of God was displayed even by the enormous wickedness of these men: adultery was punishable by death; this woman was about to escape; but in this dreadful manner her iniquity found her out, and was punished in kind. We hope that she died penitent, and found mercy; but the temporal judgment of God pursuing her to death, formed an aweful, and salutary warning to others not to venture upon such crimes, which God will punish, though man may connive at them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Men are seldom aware of the future consequences of their conduct when they yield to temptation: and few sins are followed with so fatal and durable effects, personal, domestic, or social, as adultery. But it becomes ministers and professors of godliness to forgive and be reconciled, without upraiding those who have most inexcusably injured them, when they appear penitent; and to speak comfortably to those who are in danger of being swallowed up of over much sorrow.—External attractions are very deceitful, and often prove the occasion to the possessors themselves, as well as to others, of much sin and misery, nay of final destruction: they who are thus distinguished, instead therefore of being vain of them, have cause to tremble, and to be doubly watchful against temptation, and instant in prayer for the preserving grace of God.—So much depends on the character and behaviour of ministers; that if they contract marriages with improper persons, through such worthless inducements, they will be sure to find either a snare or a cross.—Kindness is due to those, who behave with affection in the several relations of life; but every man hath his proper place and duty which require his attendance; pressing importunities therefore may be carried too far, and induce imprudent and prejudicial concessions. For it is always advisable to set about our work early; and what we call time enough, generally proves little enough.—How changeable are human affairs! Unexpectedly our brightest prospects are clouded, and the deepest calamities overtake us: we should therefore learn to moderate our affections, to lower our expectations, and to stand prepared for the worst.—Ministers should put themselves to any inconveniency to enforce their precepts by their own example.—More inhumanity and villainy may be expected from degenerate professors, than from infidels: and in general where we expect the most kindness, we often meet with the greatest injuries, that we may learn to cease from man.—An unfeeling disregard to the wants of others generally accompanies sensuality and ungoverned lusts: and there are numbers who imitate the example of those whose shameful crimes have been recorded in their punishment, to one who copies the examples of hospitality, integrity, and piety, which are mentioned with commendation in the Scriptures.—When men have cast off the fear of God, they are frequently given up to their own vile lusts even to disgrace human nature, and to exceed the very beasts in brutishness. Israelites especially, who rebel against the light, and grow hardened under the means of grace, will become as abandoned as filthy Sodomites, and vastly more inexcusable.—When iniquity becomes generally triumphant, few will dare to protest against it: and it is safer to venture into a den of lions than into such recesses of iniquity.—Yet in the worst of times, there are some who venture scorn and reproach in being kind to the Lord's servants for his sake; and who do not grudge the expence of hospitality: for whilst idleness and sensual lusts, waste a man's substance, honest labour and frugality support the expence of being liberal. But such persons live as strangers in this world, and must expect to be abused by their wicked neighbours, except when an equitable government affords them benign protection.—In imitating the good actions of God's people, we are very liable to be betrayed into their faults; (*Gen.* xix. 6—8;) and an unbelieving policy often induces us to make unwarrantable concessions: but the commission of sin to avoid danger will generally involve us in still greater difficulties.—The righteous Lord permits sinners to execute his just vengeance upon one another: and if the scene described in this chapter is horrible, what will be the discoveries of the day of judgment? Yet this is human nature! And though few will believe the humbling truth, all this wickedness is in every human heart; and if we have not committed these abominations in our lives, we owe the more gratitude to the Lord, for the restraints of his Providence, or the influences of his grace. Whilst therefore it behoves those in authority, to consider, take advice, and speak their minds, how, in this state of human nature, crimes may best be prevented by the salutary punishment of criminals: we may each of us consider, how to escape from the wrath to come, to mortify the sins of our own hearts, to resist Satan's temptations, and to avoid the pollutions that are in the world; and how we may best be prepared for, and extract benefit from, all our temporal calamities.

THEN all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.

2 And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword.

3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell *us*, how was this wickedness?

4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered, and said, I came into Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge.

5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have slain me; *and* my concubine have they forced, that she is dead.

6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel.

7 Behold ye *are* all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.

8 And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his house;

9 But now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah, *we will go up* by lot against it;

10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.

11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done among you?

13 Now

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1, 2.] There is here no mention of any judge, or great council of the nation, though it is generally thought that the council of seventy elders subsisted at this time. Probably Phinehas the high Priest confined himself to the duties of his office; and, considering his piety, zeal, wisdom, and experience, he seems to have been much neglected by the new generation of Israelites. Each tribe appears to have had it's own internal government, to which the Levite sent his message; by their united determination, the people were gathered together in arms, to the amount of 400,000 men; and we must suppose that some were left at home out of every tribe, to take care of the flocks and fields, and other concerns. Doubtless the Benjamites were summoned also, but they would not come, and probably were offended at the interposition of the other tribes in this business. Mizpeh was situated near to Shiloh, and the encampment of so vast a multitude might be more conveniently formed there: but they "were gathered together before the Lord "at Mizpeh," and were near the tabernacle, and the High Priest, to enquire of him concerning their business, yet it seems he was only applied to *officially*, to consult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, about such questions as they proposed to him.

V. 8—11.] The abhorrence of the crime here expressed, and the determination formed by the Israelites to punish the criminals, were very proper: but they formed their resolves with too much precipitation, resentment, self-preference, and self-confidence. There were "with them also "sins against the Lord:" the abomination of Gibeah was both an evidence and effect of national degeneracy; and it called for deep humiliation and lamentation that such wickedness had been wrought in Israel, as well as for indignation against the criminals. They ought to have begun with personal and national repentance and reformation; with godly sorrow, solemn sacrifices, and earnest supplications. This was required in other wars, much more in such a war as this. (*Deut.* xxiii. 9.) No resolution should have been formed, until all this had been thoroughly attended to; nor until enquiry had been made of the Lord, what he would have them do on so melancholy an occasion. For they were not expressly commanded to proceed in this manner against any crime, however horrid, except idolatry: and we do not find, that they attempted any thing against the idolatrous Danites, (xviii:) whose conduct, though not so destructive of the peace of society, more immediately struck at the honour of God and the interests of true religion. Not attending to these previous duties, but going forth to battle under the guilt of their own sins, confiding in their superior numbers and the goodness of their cause, and elated with self-preference on account of their exemption from this crime and their zeal to punish it, they met at first with severe rebukes; and the Benjamites were employed to chastise them, before they executed the vengeance of God upon the Benjamites for their more atrocious wickedness. These observations will help to explain the difficulty, which strikes the reader at the *first* perusal of this chapter: how it was, that the Israelites with so good a cause, and good intentions, and ardent zeal, and some regard to religion, should meet with such disasters. Indeed the judgments of God are a great deep, and we frequently cannot discern the reasons of his dispensations: but in this case, his wisdom and justice are easily perceived by the attentive mind, and much important instruction may be thence derived.

V. 13.

13 Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Iſrael. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Iſrael:

14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themſelves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle againſt the children of Iſrael.

15 And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities, twenty and ſix thouſand men that drew ſword, beſide the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered ſeven hundred choſen men.

16 Among all this people *there were* ſeven hundred choſen men left-handed: every one could ſling ſtones at an hair-*breadth*, and not miſs.

17 And the men of Iſrael, beſide Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thouſand men that drew ſword; all theſe *were* men of war.

18 And the children of Iſrael aroſe, and went up to the houſe of God, and aſked counſel of God, and ſaid, Which of us ſhall go up firſt to the battle againſt the children of Benjamin? And the LORD ſaid, Judah *ſhall go up* firſt.

19 And the children of Iſrael roſe up in the morning, and encamped againſt Gibeah.

20 And the men of Iſrael went out to battle againſt Benjamin, and the men of Iſrael put themſelves in array to fight againſt them at Gibeah.

21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and deſtroyed down to the ground of the Iſraelites that day twenty and two thouſand men.

22 And the people the men of Iſrael encouraged themſelves, and ſet their battle again in array, in the place where they put themſelves in array the firſt day.

23 (And the children of Iſrael went up, and wept before the LORD until even, and aſked counſel of the LORD, ſaying, Shall I go up again to battle againſt the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD ſaid, Go up againſt him.)

24 And the children of Iſrael came near againſt the children of Benjamin the ſecond day.

25 And Benjamin went forth againſt them out of Gibeah the ſecond day, and deſtroyed down to the ground of the children of Iſrael again eighteen thouſand men; all theſe drew the ſword.

26 Then

V. 13. *Benjamin*, &c.] The conduct of the Iſraelites was very equitable in this demand: but whether the rulers of Gibeah ought not previouſly to have been applied to, to have delivered up all the criminals to juſtice, ſeems doubtful. However, the refuſal of the Benjamites, and their patronizing of ſo horrid a villainy becauſe committed by their own tribe, prove them to have been deeply corrupted; and (all their advantages conſidered) they were as ripe for divine vengeance, as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had been. Confiding in their own valour and military ſkill, they ſeem to have *firſt* prepared for battle in this unequal conteſt.

V. 16. *Left-handed*, &c.] Whether theſe Benjamites could uſe both hands, as ſome think, or only the left-hand, they would diſcharge the ſtones in a direction, againſt which their opponents were not upon their guard, and thus do the greater execution. (1 *Chron.* xii. 2.) The Benjamites were much decreaſed, ſince they were numbered before their entrance into Canaan. (*Numb.* xxvi. 41.)

V. 18. *Aſked counſel*, &c.] This is the only tranſaction in this whole book where mention is made of the tabernacle, ark, prieſts, and ſacrifices; though they had been inſtituted in ſo expreſs and particular a manner; which circumſtance not only marks the ſinful inattention of Iſrael, but ſhews that the typical meaning of thoſe inſtitutions was the grand end deſigned by them. The Iſraelites did not on this occaſion enquire of the Lord, whether *they ſhould war againſt the Benjamites or not?* or what reformation, humiliation, faſting, or ſacrifices, ſhould precede the diſtreſſing enterprize? but they took it for granted that they ought to go up, and that they were worthy to be employed, and ſufficient to ſucceed in that ſervice, and only enquired which tribe ſhould have the precedency: accordingly they received an anſwer to this queſtion, which neither authorized the expedition, nor promiſed ſucceſs in it.

V. 23—25.] The people were much afflicted at ſo ſevere a rebuke, and ſomewhat affected with a ſenſe of their ſin, as having brought this calamity upon them: and they accordingly made their enquiry more particular than before. But they were not yet ſufficiently humbled or chaſtiſed; and therefore, though the Lord commanded them to go up to battle, they were again put to the worſe, and loſt ſo many men, that the whole number ſlain in the two encounters amounted to many more, than all the fighting men of the tribe of Benjamin. This was a public rebuke for national crimes, and ſhewed, that, though it was their duty to puniſh the offenders, they had not gone about it in the proper manner, and in a proper dependence upon the Lord.

V. 26.

26 Then all the children of Iſrael and all the people went up, and came unto the houſe of God, and wept, and ſat there before the LORD, and faſted that day until even, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings before the LORD.

27 And the children of Iſrael enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in thoſe days;

28 And Phinehas, the ſon of Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron, ſtood before it in thoſe days,) ſaying, Shall I yet again go out to battle againſt the children of Benjamin my brother, or ſhall I ceaſe? And the LORD ſaid, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

29 And Iſrael ſet liers in wait round about Gibeah.

30 And the children of Iſrael went up againſt the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themſelves in array againſt Gibeah, as at other times.

31 And the children of Benjamin went out againſt the people, *and* were drawn away from the city; and they began to ſmite of the people, *and* kill, as at other times, in the high-ways, of which one goeth up to the houſe of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Iſrael.

32 And the children of Benjamin ſaid, They *are* ſmitten down before us as at the firſt. But the children of Iſrael ſaid, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways.

33 And all the men of Iſrael roſe up out of their place, and put themſelves in array at Baal-tamar; and the liers in wait of Iſrael came forth out of their places, *even* out of their meadows of Gibeah.

34 And there came againſt Gibeah ten thouſand choſen men out of all Iſrael, and the battle was ſore: but they knew not that evil *was* near them.

35 And the LORD ſmote Benjamin before Iſrael; and the children of Iſrael deſtroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thouſand and an hundred men: all theſe drew the ſword.

36 So the children of Benjamin ſaw that they were ſmitten: for the men of Iſrael gave place to the Benjamites, becauſe they truſted unto the liers in wait which they had ſet beſide Gibeah.

37 And the liers in wait haſted, and ruſhed upon Gibeah: and the liers in wait drew *themſelves* along, and ſmote all the city with the edge of the ſword.

38 Now there was an appointed ſign between the men of Iſrael and the liers in wait, that they ſhould make a great flame with ſmoke to riſe up out of the city.

39 And when the men of Iſrael retired in the battle, Benjamin began to ſmite *and* kill of the men of Iſrael about thirty perſons; for they ſaid, Surely they are ſmitten down before us, as *in* the firſt battle.

40 But when the flame began to ariſe up out of the city with a pillar of ſmoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city aſcended up to heaven.

41 And when the men of Iſrael turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they ſaw that evil was come upon them.

42 Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Iſrael unto the way of the wilderneſs; but the battle overtook them: and them which *came* out of the cities they deſtroyed in the midſt of them.

43 *Thus*

V. 26—28.] At length the people were convinced of their error; and inſtead of murmuring, or queſtioning the divine authority of the anſwers that they had received, as an unhumbled heart would have been prone to do; they blamed themſelves alone: and by weeping, praying, faſting, ſacrifices, and particular enquiries, of the Lord, conducted the ſolemn buſineſs, in the way in which it ſhould originally have been undertaken; *i. e.* in a ſpirit of humiliation, repentance, faith, and dependence on the Lord. So that their loſſes proved eventually bleſſings, by ſubſerving the cauſe of true religion amongſt them. Accordingly they received from the Lord a more particular anſwer, and a promiſe of ſucceſs, which was immediately fulfilled, though not without ſome further loſs. (31.) In the mean time the Benjamite's ſucceſs increaſed their inſolence, and hardened them to their deſtruction.

V. 35. *The Lord ſmote*, &c.] Though the numbers of the Iſraelites were ſo much ſuperior to thoſe of Benjamin; though their ſtratagem was well laid and executed, and the battle bravely fought; yet the inſpired penman aſcribes the victory to the Lord as entirely, as if he had ſmitten the Benjamites by miracle.

V. 47.

43 *Thus* they incloſed the Benjamites round about, *and* chaſed them, *and* trode them down with eaſe, over againſt Gibeah toward the ſun-riſing.

44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thouſand men: all theſe *were* men of valour.

45 And they turned, and fled toward the wilderneſs unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the high-ways five thouſand men; and purſued hard after them unto Gidom, and ſlew two thouſand men of them.

46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thouſand men that drew the ſword: all theſe *were* men of valour.

47 But ſix hundred men turned, and fled to the wilderneſs unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months.

48 And the men of Iſrael turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beaſt, and all that came to hand: alſo they ſet on fire all the cities that they came to.

V. 47. *Six hundred men*, &c.] The ſmall number that are not mentioned, but which are required to make up the ſum total, are ſuppoſed to have been ſlain in the foregoing engagements: and it ſeems that the whole tribe of Benjamin, with all their women, and children, were deſtroyed, except ſix hundred men. The Iſraelites cannot be juſtified in this uncommanded, and undiſtinguiſhing ſlaughter, and were doubtleſs actuated by vehement reſentment: but the Lord was pleaſed to permit it, as an awful example to future ages of his vengeance againſt thoſe, who commit, and thoſe who countenance, and protect others in ſuch abominations. But though the battle in Gibeah ſo dreadfully overtook the Benjamites, it did not prevent the growth of ungodlineſs amongſt the other Iſraelites: ſo that "the battle "in Gibeah againſt the workers of iniquity did not over-"take them," (*Hoſea*, c. x. v. 9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are once more called to behold the fatal effects of indulged luſts; and taught to abſtain from, and mortify every ſinful inclination. Indignation againſt ſin, zeal, promptitude, ſelf-denial, unanimity, and reſolution in bringing criminals to juſtice, when united with a careful inveſtigation of facts, and circumſtances, that the innocent may not be involved with the guilty, are very commendable in rulers, and in every one according to their ſtation in ſociety: yet repentance of ſins, perſonal and national, with fruits meet for repentance; a dependance on God's mercy in Jeſus Chriſt for forgiveneſs and grace, and an application to him for direction and ſucceſs, are indiſpenſably neceſſary to enſure his acceptance and aſſiſtance. Nature can abhor with indignation the crimes of other men; but grace teaches us to lothe our own. Nature prompts us to puniſh others with ſeverity; grace inclines us to exerciſe ſeverity in mortifying our own luſts, and to be tender towards others. But if we attempt to execute wrath upon offenders, or even to reprove, and reform them, whilſt we are under the guilt of unrepented, and allowed ſin in our hearts, and lives; it is merciful in God to rebuke us ſharply for our hypocriſy, and not to leave us to be hardened in it through impunity. But having obtained forgiveneſs, and deliverance from our own ſins, we may reaſonably hope to be uſeful to others alſo: (*Matt.* c. vii. v. 1—5. *Rom.* c. ii. v. 1. 21—23. 1 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 16.) We may not judge of the goodneſs of a cauſe by it's ſucceſs at firſt, or for a long time; but muſt wait for the final iſſue of things, except we can determine by the law of God. And if we are baffled in our endeavours, (though honeſtly meant, and zealouſly perſiſted in,) to ſerve the cauſe of God; we are not to infer, that we are not called to, or are required to deſiſt from them; or even to content ourſelves in our ill ſucceſs: but we are reminded to inquire, whether we have begun our work at the right end? whether our private conduct do not blaſt our public endeavours? whether we have not been precipitate in our meaſures? whether we have duly adverted to our own character, as ſinners, and are habitually exerciſing repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? whether we have not failed of humility, and of tenderneſs towards others? and whether by ſelf-preference, and ſelf-confidence we have not provoked the Lord to leave us experimentally to learn what we are in ourſelves, and what we can do without him? Many an honeſt and zealous endeavour, in a good cauſe, has attained but little ſucceſs; for ſuch reaſons as theſe. Therefore we ſhould ſtrictly examine, and deeply humble ourſelves for our ſins; praying earneſtly, that the Lord would not condemn us, but ſhew us wherefore he contendeth with us. And ſolemn times ſet apart for faſting and prayer are never more ſeaſonable, than when we are conſtrained to lament the ill ſucceſs, which hath attended our labours to glorify God, and promote his cauſe, whether as miniſters, or as private Chriſtians. When our failures have this effect, they will promote our ſucceſs; our blunders will increaſe our wiſdom, and our weakneſs will prove an occaſion of increaſing our ſpiritual ſtrength: ſatan, and his moſt formidable agents will in due time be conſtrained to give ground, and whatſoever we attempt ſhall proſper. In the mean time we ſhould thankfully accept of his chaſtiſement, and not deſpair of that ſucceſs, which we prematurely at firſt expected. But it is hard to temper zeal with tenderneſs, and boldneſs with meekneſs and wiſdom: impetuoſity hurries us into unwarrantable exceſſes, or timidity ſtops ſhort of proper deciſion. We ought therefore to watch careſully over our own ſpirits, and to pray continually to be preſerved from this ſtrange fire in the work of God: and above all to depend upon the atoning blood of Chriſt for the forgiveneſs, and acceptance of our beſt ſervices. The ſame conſiderations ſhould induce us to make candid allowances for thoſe, who are betrayed into ſimilar, or contrary miſtakes. But evil purſueth ſinners; their triumphing is ſhort, and increaſes their hardneſs, and preſumption: and how dreadful will be their caſe, when they ſhall ſee deſtruction coming upon them,

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. The lamentation of Iſrael for the Benjamites; and their perplexity, through their oath, not to marry their daughters to them, v. 1—4. 6, 7. 15—18. *2d. The inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead deſtroyed, for not coming to Mizpeh, &c; except the virgins, who were married to ſome of the Benjamites, v.* 5. 8—12. *3d. Their contrivance for furniſhing the others with wives, v.* 19—25.

NOW the men of Iſrael had ſworn in Mizpeh, ſaying, There ſhall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.

2 And the people came to the houſe of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept ſore;

3 And ſaid, O LORD God of Iſrael, why is this come to paſs in Iſrael, that there ſhould be to-day one tribe lacking in Iſrael?

4 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that the people roſe early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

5 And the children of Iſrael ſaid, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Iſrael that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? for they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, ſaying, He ſhall ſurely be put to death.

6 And the children of Iſrael repented them for Benjamin their brother, and ſaid, There is one tribe cut off from Iſrael this day:

7 How ſhall we do for wives for them that remain, ſeeing we have ſworn by the LORD, that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?

8 And they ſaid, What one *is there* of the tribes of Iſrael that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeſh-gilead to the aſſembly.

9 For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead there.

10 And the congregation ſent thither twelve thouſand men of the valianteſt, and commanded them, ſaying, Go and ſmite the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead with the edge of the ſword, with the women and the children.

11 And this *is* the thing that ye ſhall do, Ye ſhall utterly deſtroy every male, and every woman that hath lien by man.

12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any

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without any poſſibility of eſcape! For though temporal calamities are often terrible, eternal miſery alone is to be feared entirely, and abſolutely. At that awful period ſinners will be holden in the cords of their own iniquities; their rejoicing will be turned into wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, and all their hopes will iſſue in eternal deſpair. Hitherto there is ſpace given for repentance, a refuge provided, mercy proclaimed, and a throne of grace erected: thither let ſinners come, and plead the Saviour's name, and yet they ſhall be ſafe and happy. But how will they eſcape, who neglect ſo great ſalvation? all things will combine to haſten, and enhance their condemnation; eſpecially that of thoſe, who live under the light of the goſpel, whoſe crimes are more inexcuſable, and whoſe puniſhment will be proportionably ſevere. And all, who patronize, and delight in the workers of iniquity, will as accomplices ſhare their awful doom. From this condemnation good Lord deliver us!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *There ſhall not*, &c.] This raſh vow was the effect of the people's great indignation at the brutal crime of the men of Gibeah, and at the tribe of Benjamin, for protecting them. They deemed thoſe unworthy to be married to any of the daughters of Iſrael, who could treat another man's wife in ſuch a manner, or ſide with thoſe who did: and they haſtily ſwore that they would none of them marry their daughters to them: the conſequence of which ſeemed to be, either that a tribe would periſh from Iſrael; or that the ſurviving Benjamites would be conſtrained to marry heathen wives, contrary to law. Thus they brought themſelves needleſsly into great perplexities, and at laſt evaded the vow by a mere artifice.

V. 4. *They built there an altar*, &c.] As ſo great a multitude was aſſembled, and there were ſo many occaſions for offering ſin-offerings, burnt-offerings, thank-offerings, and vows, &c, probably the brazen altar was found inſufficient, and this was erected as a temporary addition to it, for the preſent occaſion: it ſeems to have been built at Shiloh, (v. 2.)

V. 5. *A great oath*, &c.] They who refuſed their aſſiſtance on this occaſion were doubtleſs blame-worthy, but this did not warrant their brethren thus to devote them to total extirpation. They were backward enough in attempting to extirpate the Canaanites, who were God's devoted enemies; but very haſty to vow the deſtruction of their brethren, who ſlighted their authority.

V. 9—12. *None of the*, &c.] This city lay at a conſiderable diſtance, beyond Jordan, in the borders of the Ammonites, and might not have heard of the vow, that had been made. But if they were guilty of neglect, and diſaffection to the common cauſe, they had not aſſiſted the Benjamites: and yet when the people were grieved for having proceeded to ſuch extremities againſt them; they proceeded to treat thoſe, who were far leſs criminal, with equal rigour! Surely a ſlighter puniſhment might have ſufficed, and enough of the blood of Iſrael had already been

male:

male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

13 And the whole congregation ſent *ſome* to ſpeak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them.

14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives, which they had ſaved alive of the women of Jabeſh-gilead: and yet ſo they ſufficed them not.

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, becauſe that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Iſrael.

16 Then the elders of the congregation ſaid, How ſhall we do for wives for them that remain, ſeeing the women are deſtroyed out of Benjamin?

17 And they ſaid, *There muſt be* an inheritance for them that be eſcaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not deſtroyed out of Iſrael.

18 Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Iſrael have ſworn, ſaying, Curſed *be* he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.

19 Then they ſaid, Behold, *there is* a feaſt of the LORD in Shiloh yearly, *in a place* which *is* on the north ſide of Beth-el, on the eaſt ſide of the high-way that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the ſouth of Lebonah.

20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, ſaying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;

21 And ſee, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

22 And it ſhall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will ſay unto them, Be favourable unto them for our ſakes; becauſe we reſerved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that* ye ſhould be guilty.

23 And the children of Benjamin did ſo, and took *them* wives according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inhe-

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ſhed! In interpreting their oath, they concluded to ſpare the virgins; probably with reference to the orders given concerning the Midianitiſh women; (*Numb.* c. xxxi. v. 17, 18.) But if their great curſe would admit of this limitation; why could they not have ſpared the other women, and children, and innocent perſons, and only have puniſhed the criminals? But eſpecially why did they not aſk counſel of the Lord, before they proceeded to action? The habit of military executions, which they had contracted in the wars of Canaan, in obedience to the Lord's expreſs command, ſeems to have had too great influence upon them in this affair, without making proper diſtinctions: and convenience, rather than juſtice, or piety ſeems to have induced them to ſpare the virgins, that they might be extricated from ſome of the difficulties, in which their other oath had involved them. But they would have acted better, if they had repented of their raſh oaths, brought their ſin-offerings, and ſought forgiveneſs in the appointed way, than thus to attempt to avoid the guilt of perjury, by actions equally unjuſtifiable.

V. 17. *There muſt be an inheritance*, &c.] The whole inheritance of the tribe was the property of the ſurvivors; and therefore wives muſt be procured them, that they might be repleniſhed to occupy it. The conduct of the Iſraelites in preſerving to the tribe of Benjamin its whole inheritance, was very commendable. Thus the ſurviving Benjamites were unexpectedly advanced to great affluence, by the miſerable deſtruction of their relations: and had it not been for the oath, many of the Iſraelites would have readily contracted alliances with them; by which it appears that they acted conſcientiouſly, though under a miſtaken opinion.

V. 21. *Dance in dances*, &c.] As ſacred dances formed a part of the religious ſolemnities under that diſpenſation; and as this feaſt was obſerved at Shiloh, we may ſuppoſe that it was a religious feſtival; perhaps the feaſt of tabernacles: otherwiſe dancing would have been very unſeaſonable in this time of public affliction. Yet probably the religious joy had gradually given place to a more diſſipated, and ſenſual mirth; as hath been the caſe with the feſtivals, which have been cuſtomarily obſerved in the Chriſtian church. Theſe dances were of young women only, without either men, or married women. This permiſſion was an evaſion of the vow, and gave licenſe to fraud, violence, and the marriage of children, without the conſent of their parents: and if that might be allowed of, the Benjamites could have found themſelves wives, without their giving them their daughters, and without uſing auy force towards them.

V. 22. *Each man*, &c.] In this diminiſhed ſtate of the tribe, when every Benjamite could have maintained ſeveral wives, they only deviſed to procure one for each man: whence it appears, that polygamy, though connived at, was not generally practiſed amongſt them. Nor did they ever propoſe ſending them to the neighbouring nations to procure wives; by which it is probable, that ſuch marriages were not very common at that time.

V. 23. *And dwelt in them.*] Thus the remains of the

ſitance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

24 And the children of Iſrael departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe, and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

25 In thoſe days *there was* no king in Iſrael: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

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tribe began to increaſe; and ſome compute, that Ehud was raiſed up to be the judge of Iſrael, of this tribe, after it had been thus diminiſhed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the paſſions are vehemently excited, thoſe meaſures appear needful, which afterwards are perceived to be unreaſonable, and unlawful. Such times require peculiar caution, and deliberation, that our paſſions may have leiſure to ſubſide; elſe we ſhall certainly make work for bitter repentance. There is this danger in all conteſts public and private; and a good cauſe often becomes the occaſion of great crimes, as the exceſs of zeal carries men beyond all the bounds of equity, and humanity. Well might the politic Romans refuſe triumphs to thoſe, who conquered in civil war; in which, the common intereſt is weakened, and the common enemies exult, whatever party acquires the aſcendancy. Such unnatural contentions are generally conducted with the moſt pertinacious fury, and the moſt envenomed reſentment, through the depravity of the human heart, and the ſubtlety of ſatan! But he triumphs ſtill more, when he can excite diviſions, and contentions in the church of God, whereby the truth is diſgraced, the weak, and prejudiced are ſtumbled, and the enemies of religion alone are rejoiced. Yet many perſons of apparent godlineſs, uſe greater aſperity againſt their brethren, who are not exactly of their mind; than againſt the avowed oppoſers of all religion! But all ſuch conteſts end in bitterneſs; (2 *Sam.* c. ii. v. 26, 27;) and the combatants will ere long weep over the effects of their own ſucceſs. Nothing can be more abſurd, than oaths taken, and ſolemn vows made, in the heat of paſſion: many have thereby entangled themſelves in inextricable perplexity, have been induced to add one crime to another, and to uſe the moſt diſingenuous evaſions, and equivocations: (*Matt.* c. xiv. v. 7—11. *Acts* c. xxiii. v. 12—24:) of all things they require the moſt cautious reflection upon their future probable conſequences. Our penitent confeſſions, and devotional exerciſes are too often ſucceeded by relapſes into ſin, for want of ſimply ſeeking direction from God, and depending on him to uphold us; whereby alone, we can diſcern, and proceed in the ſafe path, with comfort to ourſelves, and with honour to our profeſſion. Even neceſſary juſtice ſhould be executed with deep concern: and men would not be forward in inflicting vengeance on leſſer offenders, whilſt more atrocious criminals were ſpared, were they not more ambitious of dominion for themſelves, than zealous for the glory of God. Even lawful employments may induce habits, which will be apt to influence the conduct in concerns of another nature, and with very bad effect: we ſhould therefore ſeek for ſelf-knowledge, keep a ſtrict watch upon our hearts, and be daily conſulting the word of God as the rule of our duty. When great offenders are much caſt down, they ſhould be treated with gentleneſs, and preſerved, if poſſible from temptations to deſpair, and total apoſtacy: and every act of apparent ſeverity ſhould be connected with evident diſintereſtedneſs. Too often the ordinances of God degenerate into a mere form, and carnal mirth ſupplants holy rejoicing: but thoſe ſcenes, which the ſenſual, moſt delight in, expoſe them to unthought of conſequences; (*Eccl.* c. xi. v. 9;) and give ſatan, and deſigning men their utmoſt advantage againſt them: all our chearfulneſs ſhould therefore be tempered with reflection, and watchfulneſs. Children are generally very culpable, who marry without the conſent of their parents; and they are ſtill more vile, who entice them to do ſo: yet when the matter cannot be remedied, it is commonly the parent's duty, and wiſdom to be favourable, and to make the beſt of it. That men can be ſo abſurd, as to counſel others to acts of treachery, or violence, and to countenance them therein, out of a ſenſe of duty, forms a ſtriking proof of the blindneſs of the human mind, when left to itſelf; and of the fatal effects of an ignorant, or erroneous conſcience. Our troubles in this world may be ſucceeded by ſeaſons of comfort, and iſſue in our advantage; but they, who are cut off in their ſins, ſink into evil, only evil, and that for ever. Finally, we ſhould be thankful for good magiſtrates, to reſtrain the violence of wicked men: but the fear, and love of God ſhould reſtrain us from doing what is right in our own eyes, except as they are opened to behold the excellency of his moſt holy law.

THE BOOK OF

R U T H.

This ſhort book forms an appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to the enſuing hiſtory. It contains many particulars concerning the family of Elimelech, and informs us in what manner Ruth, a Moabiteſs, became the wife of Boaz, and an anceſtor of David, and of Chriſt. The chief events of the hiſtory took place at Beth-lehem, afterwards the city of David, whoſe genealogy concludes the book; and they muſt have occurred early in the time of the Judges. And probably Samuel was the penman thereof. We find in this Book excellent examples of faith, piety, patience, humility, induſtry, and loving kindneſs, in the ordinary occurrences of life: intimations of the ſpecial care, which God's providence takes of our moſt minute concerns, encouraging our entire confidence therein: and ſome typical repreſentations of the condeſcending love of the Saviour, in aſſuming the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; and in bringing us ſinners of the Gentiles into the cloſeſt union with himſelf, and enriching us with all his unſearchable riches: theſe ſhould bind our hearts to his ſervice, and conſtrain us to live to his glory.

Before Chriſt 1320.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. Elimelech, and his family going into the land of Moab; his death; the marriage of his two ſons with Moabitiſh women; their death without children, and Naomi Elimelech's widow preparing to return into the land of Iſrael, v. 1—6. *2d. Orpah and Ruth, her daughters-in-law, propoſing to accompany her; her converſation with them, Orpah's return back, and Ruth's profeſſion, and reſolution to attend her, v.* 7—18. *3d. Their arrival and reception at Beth-lehem, v.* 19—22.

NOW it came to paſs, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land: and a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to ſojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife, and his two ſons.

Before Chriſt 1320.

2 And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two ſons Mahlon, and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah: and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech, Naomi's huſband, died; and ſhe was left, and her two ſons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died alſo both of them; and the woman was left of her two ſons and her huſband.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Went to ſojourn*, &c.] This removal of Elimelech from the ordinances and people of God appears to have been improper. The famine was not ſo extreme, but others could endure it, and he was a perſon of property, and not likely to want the neceſſaries of life. Probably he thought that he could live better, and at leſs expence in the land of Moab, than in Canaan; but it terminated in the impoveriſhing, and waſting of his family. Elimelech "ſignifies my God the king," and Mahlon, and Chilion, ſignify "ſickneſs, and conſumption," having perhaps been children of a weakly conſtitution.

V. 4. *They took them wives*, &c.] This was the natural conſequence of Elimelech's conduct, in bringing them away from the people of God, and leading them into an acquaintance with the women of Moab. Thus they ſettled in the land of Moab, and ſpent their lives amongſt idolaters, eſtranged from the worſhip of Jehovah; and had they left families, they would probably have been incorporated with the Moabites.

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab, how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her: and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters: for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God.

17 Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to

V. 6. *Then she arose*, &c.] Perhaps Naomi abode in this strange country contrary to her inclination out of regard to her husband, and her sons; and she was now encouraged to return, by hearing, that the Lord had visited the land with greater plenty; for it would have been very hard for a destitute widow to return home, in a time of great scarcity. She seems to have been a person of eminent faith, and piety, and to have diligently instructed her daughters-in-law in the true religion; which she recommended by her example. They both had a great affection for her, and at first purposed to go with her into the land of Israel, notwithstanding her afflicted condition, though Orpah's resolution failed upon the trial. And their conduct to their husbands, and to herself, received her commendation, and excited her good wishes, and fervent prayers for them.

V. 11. *That they may be*, &c.] According to the law, and custom of the surviving brother marrying the widow of the deceased, who left no children. Naomi thus intimated to them, that she had no temporal advantages, or prospects to propose to them, if they were not disposed to accompany her out of disinterested love to God, and to the people of Israel. Upon this Orpah, not being prepared to venture all consequences, and renounce all her worldly prospects, for the sake of religion, though reluctantly, and with tokens of affection for Naomi, returned back to her country, her relations, and her gods; (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 22. 2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 10.)

V. 15. *Return thou*, &c.] Naomi did not desire that Ruth should return; but she intended to make trial of her sincerity, and to excite her to consider how she could bear poverty, and hardship, for the sake of the God of Israel. That if she were not in earnest it might now be discovered; or that she might set out with more steady determination of mind, and more absolute dependance on the grace of God, to enable to stand stedfast in her profession. When therefore she perceived that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she spake no more upon that subject.

V. 16. *Intreat me not*, &c.] The examples and instructions of Naomi had given Ruth the most favourable opinion of the character and religion of the Israelites, so that she desired to have her lot with them at any rate: for the sake of this, she was willing to renounce all her connexions, and prospects in the land of Moab, and to embrace hardship, and penury in a strange country, (c. ii. v. 11.) She was also determined to cleave to Naomi, whose converse had been so useful to her, however destitute, and afflicted she were, until death separated them. For her sincerity in this profession she called the Lord to witness, as well as to multiply her troubles, if she did not fulfill this her solemn engagement. These were doubtless the effects of true faith, and grace; and we may be sure that he who had thus far taught her, would bring her acquainted with every thing necessary to her salvation, and comfort, in due season, and order; and her future conduct evinced that her profession was sincere, and her faith living and genuine. Thus she renounced idolatry, and became a worshipper, and servant of the living God, and counted all but loss for the sake of his favour, and salvation.

V. 19. *Was moved*, &c.] Naomi had probably lived in affluence, and had been much respected: her neighbours

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Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them; and they said, *Is* this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.

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were therefore much surprised to see her return home, so altered in her appearance, and circumstances.

V. 20. *Call me*, &c.] Naomi signifies "pleasant," but Mara signifies "bitter:" she humbly considered her afflictions as coming from the Lord's hand upon her, and her family, for her sins, and that thereby "the Almighty testified against her," (v. 13:) perhaps considering herself to have been guilty in not leaving the land of Moab, immediately upon the death of her husband.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot form any judgment of the Lord's love or hatred towards us, or others, by outward circumstances; for whom he loves he chastens for their profit, and leaves his enemies to be hardened in prosperity. Afflictions should be submitted to, as the rebuke of God, and we are reminded by them to exercise repentance, and resignation to the divine will: for every endeavour, by carnal policy, to shift off correction, will eventually entangle us in greater difficulties. They, who, when they meet with inconveniency, or hardship, are disposed to change their situations, seldom prosper in this world; and prove that they understand not the real causes of their uneasiness: the displeasure of God, and the pride, and impatience of our hearts, cannot be avoided by change of place, or situation; and whilst these remain, we shall find misery, whithersoever we remove. But when we are tempted to remove from the ordinances of God, and the communion of his people, out of secular motives, we should "remember Lot," and Sodom. In such measures our children, and families are deeply concerned: if they are estranged from the people, and house of God, and brought acquainted with persons of no religion, or of a false religion, no other can be expected, but that they will closely connect themselves with them, and have their portion with them living and dying. Better would it be, to be pinched with poverty, and worn down with labour in the Lord's land, than to live in luxury, and ease, by hazarding such consequences. For our earthly trials, or enjoyments are of short continuance; death is continually removing those of every age, and situation; breaking in upon the most endeared unions as soon as formed, and marring all our outward comforts: we cannot therefore too decidedly prefer those advantages, which shall endure for ever; that we may be ready for every separating stroke. If we are constrained to dwell for a season in places of temptation, we should retire, when the necessity ceases; and consider every rebuke in God's providence as a call to us, to come out, and be separate from the workers of iniquity. If the Lord visit his people, in giving them bread, they ought to be content, and thankful, though they have not abundance of silver, and gold: and the assurance, that he will supply the real necessities of his true servants, should encourage us chearfully to cast our lot amongst them. In every situation, and relation in life, especially amongst such, as are strangers to, or prejudiced against the truth, believers must aim to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And when they behave with prudence, integrity, meekness, and kindness; when they have well performed the duties of relative life; when they shew attention to the temporal comfort, and compassion for the sufferings of those around them, with a readiness to do them good; and when they commend what is right in the moral, and relative conduct of those, who are not acquainted with spiritual things; they win much upon them, and render them more disposed to take in good part their endeavours to do good to their souls: and thus, beside the comfort of domestic harmony, the Lord will bless such a conduct, to be the means of bringing those, who were ignorant, careless, or prejudiced, to inquire after his truth, and salvation: whilst the contrary behaviour of too many professors forms the grand prejudice against true religion in the minds of thousands. However many will entertain an affection for such believers, as have been kind to them, and will have favourable sentiments of the gospel; who will not renounce all their worldly interests, pleasures, connexions, and prospects, and join themselves to the poor, and despised people of God, for the sake of Christ, and his salvation. They more desire, "rest in the house of an husband," or in some worldly settlement, or satisfaction, than that rest, to which Jesus invites our souls; and therefore upon trial they will depart from Christ, though sorrowful, and reluctant. Nothing but a deep sense of the importance of eternal things; and a conviction of our guilt, and our need of a Saviour: nothing but that faith, which is inseparably connected with true repentance, and hatred of sin, and which works by love of Christ, and his people, his truths, ordinances, and precepts, will carry a man through all possible temptations in such a world as this. And therefore the Lord proves those, who profess themselves his disciples, by setting the consequences before them in his word, and by giving them some experience of them in his Providence; by which they, who have not faith, are discouraged, and go back to their own people, and their idols: this, though lamentable, is no one's loss but their own. And though we ought greatly to desire the increase of true Christians, yet we should be cautious in our endeavours to multiply the number of *professors*; lest we engage those, who will betray the cause, that they are expected to defend. Especially we ought to examine whether we ourselves are thus stedfastly minded, and determined to cast our lot with the Lord's people, however poor, despised, or persecuted; and that living, or dying, and for ever? We should inquire whether this be our aim, and prayer? Whe-

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz, v. 1—3. 2d. His pious meeting with his reapers, and kind behaviour to her, and her reſpectful conduct towards him, v. 4—16. 3d. Her return to Naomi, and converſation with her, v. 17—23.

AND Naomi had a kinſman of her huſband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabiteſs ſaid unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after *him*, in whoſe ſight I ſhall find grace. And ſhe ſaid unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 And ſhe went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and ſaid unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they anſwered him, The LORD bleſs thee.

5 Then ſaid Boaz unto his ſervant that was ſet over the reapers, Whoſe damſel *is* this?

6 And the ſervant that was ſet over the reapers anſwered, and ſaid, It *is* the Moabitiſh damſel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab;

7 And ſhe ſaid, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers amongſt the ſheaves: ſo ſhe came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that ſhe tarried a little in the houſe.

8 Then ſaid Boaz unto Ruth, Heareſt thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here faſt by my maidens.

9 *Let* thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they ſhall not touch thee? and when thou art athirſt, go unto the veſſels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

10 Then ſhe fell on her face, and bowed

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ther the proſpect of ſecular advantage has not ſome influence upon our minds? And whether, if that were withdrawn, or changed for the proſpect of poverty, and ſuffering, we ſhould not be tempted to draw back? But if we thus decided in our judgment for the Lord, and his ſervice, and ſalvation, he will aſſuredly accept of, and provide for us; he will make up all our loſſes, ſupport us under all our trials, and communicate unſpeakable conſolations; and whilſt others draw back unto perdition, we ſhall believe unto the ſaving of our ſouls: nay we ſhall even grow more determined by the apoſtacy of others, and by our own difficulties, and temptations: if we are reduced in our circumſtances, we ſhall be more grieved for the ſake of others, than for ourſelves; the conſciouſneſs of our ſins will teach us to ſubmit to our trials without murmuring: and our mourning will be mingled with heavenly ſweetneſs. Whilſt we remark the changes, that take place with reſpect to others, with compaſſion we ſhould be reminded to prepare for changes ourſelves, eſpecially for our laſt change; when the true believer ſhall find that all things have worked together for his everlaſting good.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 2. *Let me now*, &c.] When Naomi and Ruth were ſettled in ſome homely lodging at Bethlehem; the latter, expecting nothing in Canaan but a life of hard labour, and mean fare, propoſed to go and glean in ſome field, where ſhe might obtain ſuch a favour; for the ſubſiſtence of herſelf, and her mother in-law, who was unable to endure the fatigue and heat, incident to ſuch an employment. The Lord indeed intended other things for her; but he was pleaſed in this manner to prove her ſincerity, humility, induſtry, and patience; and her affection to Naomi for his ſake. Such a trial Orpah could not have ſtood; but had ſhe been aſſured of ſuch a ſettlement in Iſrael, as Ruth at length obtained, ſhe would have come alſo, and have made an hypocritical profeſſion of religion for the ſake of ſecular advantage.

V. 3. *Her hap*, &c.] This circumſtance was *with Ruth* merely accidental, and not the reſult of choice, or contrivance; but it was the effect of the Lord's ſecret direction, in whoſe providence great events depend upon apparently trivial incidents.

V. 4. *The Lord be with you*, &c.] The name of Boaz ſignifies, "ſtrength is in him," and he was a "mighty man "of wealth;" but he was not above perſonally ſuperintending his own reapers; which is generally both for the maſter's intereſt, and the ſervant's comfort. The pious, affectionate language interchanged betwixt him, and his reapers, and which appears to have been familiar to them, induces us to hope that there were many godly perſons in Iſrael, notwithſtanding national defections: and it ſhews what effect their religion had upon their relative conduct, and common converſation, which all ſavoured of unaffected piety, and mutual good-will, producing affability in Boaz, and reſpect and affection in them. It is too lamentably true, that ſuch language as this is ſeldom heard in our fields, whilſt the bounty of Providence is gathering in; but frequently the reverſe; yea whatever can inflame the paſſions, and corrupt the morals, is both heard, and witneſſed on theſe occaſions: ſo that a ſtranger, who ſhould occaſionally be preſent, would thence be apt to form a very different opinion of the religion of England, than Ruth did of that of Iſrael, from the converſe and conduct of Boaz, and his reapers.

V. 10. *Seeing I am a ſtranger.*] That is, no Iſraelite, herſelf

herſelf to the ground, and ſaid unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou ſhouldeſt take knowledge of me, ſeeing I *am* a ſtranger?

11 And Boaz anſwered and ſaid unto her, It hath fully been ſhewed me all that thou haſt done unto thy mother-in-law ſince the death of thine huſband; and *how* thou haſt left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou kneweſt not heretofore.

12 The LORD recompenſe thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Iſrael, under whoſe wings thou art come to truſt.

13 Then ſhe ſaid, Let me find favour in thy ſight, my lord; for that thou haſt comforted me, and for that thou haſt ſpoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz ſaid unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morſel in the vinegar. And ſhe ſat beſide the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and ſhe did eat, and was ſufficed, and left.

15 And when ſhe was riſen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, ſaying, Let her glean even among the ſheaves, and reproach her not:

16 And let fall alſo *ſome* of the handfuls of purpoſe for her, and leave *them*, that ſhe may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

17 So ſhe gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that ſhe had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 And ſhe took *it* up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law ſaw what ſhe had gleaned: and ſhe brought forth, and gave to her that ſhe had reſerved after ſhe was ſufficed.

19 And her mother-in-law ſaid unto her, Where haſt thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughteſt thou? bleſſed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And ſhe ſhewed her mother-in-law with whom ſhe had wrought, and ſaid, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day *is* Boaz.

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but a Heathen born, and brought up, a Moabiteſs, who am unworthy the regard, and unmeet for the ſociety of the people of God, even for that of the handmaidens, (v. 13.) the pooreſt of them; much leſs of the attention of one ſo eminent amongſt them. (*Matt.* c. xv. v. 26, 27. *Luke* c. vii. v. 6, 7.)

V. 11, 12.] Ruth had renounced the gods of Moab, and become a profeſſed worſhipper, and ſervant of the God of Iſrael. In proof of her ſincerity, ſhe had left the land of her nativity, where ſhe might have expected a comfortable ſettlement, to come into the land of Iſrael, without any proſpect of ſubſiſtance, but by her labour. She had left her parents, who were ſtill living, and her other relations, and friends, to come to a people, with whom ſhe had had no previous acquaintance, but againſt whom ſhe had been educated in prejudice, and enmity; and to attach herſelf to a poor widow, whom by her induſtry ſhe muſt help to maintain. And this ſhe did, becauſe ſhe believed that Jehovah was the only true God, and Iſrael his people: and therefore ſhe deſired to be aſſociated with them, and to have the benefit of the ordinances, and inſtructions, with which they were favoured. Thus ſhe came to truſt under the wings of the Lord God of Iſrael, depending on his power, care, and love, both for the bleſſings of ſalvation, and for the things, which were needful for the body. This her conduct had been much noticed, and Boaz had heard of it, and had formed a favourable opinion of her faith, and piety; and therefore he ſhewed her much kindneſs, encouraging her induſtry and affording her protection: and he aſſured her of his prayers for her, "that the Lord would recompenſe her work, &c:" for, though nothing, that we do, can merit ought of God, as a debt; yet every thing which is done, and every advantage, which is renounced for the Lord's ſake, out of humble faith, ſhall certainly be recompenſed with a gracious reward; perhaps in this world with more deſirable temporal comforts; than thoſe, which have been left behind: aſſuredly with inward peace, and with eternal life at laſt; (*Luke* c. xviii. v. 29, 30.) In all ages, and nations, converſion is ſubſtantially the ſame: irreligion or falſe religion are therein exchanged for the ſpiritual worſhip of the true God, through the appointed mediator, and in his inſtituted ordinances; the practice of ſin is changed for the purſuit of true holineſs; ſelf-dependance, for reliance upon God's mercy, grace, and providence for every thing; the expectation of felicity from the world, for the favour of God, as our portion; and the company of the workers of iniquity, for the ſociety of thoſe, who love, and ſerve God. But many *circumſtantials* depend upon a man's outward ſituation. They who have godly parents, and relations, who are engaged in lawful, and uſeful employments, and live in peaceable times, will not be immediately required to make the ſame ſacrifices, as they are, who are called out of families of embittered oppoſers, from occupations inconſiſtent with the precepts of God's word, or in times of furious perſecution. However the more we venture, renounce, or ſuffer for the Lord's ſake, the clearer evidence we have, that our faith is genuine, and that we ſhall receive a full reward. The principle, and the precept are in all caſes alike; but the application varies, according as different trials are allotted us, in the providence of God.

20 And Naomi ſaid unto her daughter-in-law, Bleſſed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindneſs to the living and to the dead. And Naomi ſaid unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, one of our next kinſmen.

21 And Ruth the Moabiteſs ſaid, He ſaid unto me alſo, Thou ſhalt keep faſt by my young men, until they have ended all my harveſt.

22 And Naomi ſaid unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

23 So ſhe kept faſt by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harveſt and of wheat-harveſt; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1ſt. Naomi inſtructing Ruth how to claim Boaz for her huſband, v. 1—7. 2d. The behaviour of Boaz towards her, v. 8—15. 3d. Her return to, and conference with Naomi, v. 16—18.

V. 20. *To the living*, &c.] Boaz had been kind to Elimelech's family, before his removal to the land of Moab; and Naomi rejoiced that his care of her had revived, when ſhe ſo much needed his aſſiſtance; and ſhe begged of the Lord to repay him with his bleſſing.

V. 22. *That they meet thee not*, &c.] That would ſeem a ſlight put upon the kindneſs ſhewn her, as well as evidence an inconſtant temper of mind, which would give them an unfavourable opinion of her.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The diſtinctions, which we form in our narrow minds, concerning little, and great, mean, or important in the perſons, and affairs of men, do not comport with the judgment of the Lord: the gleaning of a poor Moabiteſs, who truſted in him, was deemed more worthy of his condeſcending notice, than the tranſactions of the greateſt princes, then living, which are almoſt entirely conſigned to oblivion. We ought not therefore to mind high things, but to condeſcend to men of low eſtate; and neither to glory in, nor to value others for thoſe diſtinctions, which the Lord thus diſregards. Honeſt induſtry, humble patience in poverty, and hardſhip, and a willingneſs to labour for aged parents, relations, or benefactors, who are unable to provide for themſelves, when they ſpring from true faith, are both honourable, and acceptable to God. True religion will teach a man to behave with propriety in every circumſtance, and relation of life, and will form kind maſters, faithful ſervants, and harmonious families: it will produce mutual love amongſt perſons of different ranks, and engage the rich to condeſcenſion, and the poor to humble, and reſpectful behaviour to their ſuperiors, and benefactors: and it will naturally expreſs itſelf in prayer, and praiſe. This return the pooreſt may render for favours beſtowed, and no liberality will excuſe the rich in the neglect of it: and the good examples of thoſe, who are placed in eminent ſtations, and employ many in their ſervice, are moſt extenſively beneficial. With what gratitude to God, and liberality to the poor ſhould the bounty of a kind providence be received by us unworthy ſinners! and how inexcuſable are they, who abuſe their plenty in intemperance, or covetouſly neglect the indigent, or allow themſelves in wickedneſs, when they are thus experiencing the goodneſs of the Lord! For if the unexpected, and unmerited favours, which we receive from our fellow creatures, engage us to gratitude; what return ought we to render to the Lord for his mercies? In ſhewing kindneſs to the deſtitute, we ought to avoid every thing, that may appear like reproaching them; and uſe our authority to induce others to a ſimilar conduct; for a generous mind in diſtreſs has very exquiſite ſenſibility, that ſhould not be wounded. All perſons ſhould be careful what connexions they form, and what places they frequent; but eſpecially young women, both for conſcience, and credit's ſake: and parents, and other ſuperior relations ſhould have a watchful eye over them, and require an account, where, and with whom they have ſpent their time. In the path of duty is ſafety, and we ſhould keep cloſe to thoſe employments, and ſituations, wherein the Lord hath bleſſed us, without being deſirous of change: he will not ſuffer thoſe, who truſt in him, to want the neceſſaries of life, and will often far exceed their expectations; and tender concern for each other's welfare, affectionate, and edifying converſation, with true piety, and contentment, will render the loweſt circumſtances, and the meaneſt fare comfortable. The Lord will prove thoſe, who enter upon a religious profeſſion, whether they are ſound hearted, and willing to ſtoop, and ſuffer for his ſake or not: but when he hath made trial of them, he will ſtir up the minds of his more experienced ſervants, to ſpeak comfortably to, and deal kindly with them. This is a good work, which all Chriſtians ſhould embrace every opportunity of performing; eſpecially to thoſe, who are chearfully induſtrious, and enduring hardſhip for conſcience ſake. But may not accommodation be here allowed of? Ought not parents to aſk their children where, and what they have gleaned from the ſermons, which they have heard, the books, which they have read, and the converſation that they have joined in? May we not alſo aſk ourſelves the ſame queſtion? He that would increaſe in wiſdom muſt be always thus gleaning, and muſt call himſelf frequently to account reſpecting it; and determine, if poſſible, to get ſome profitable hint from every perſon, and every occurrence. They, who thus daily collect knowledge from others, and keep cloſe to the word, and ordinances of God, will become thoroughly furniſhed for every good work. Finally let us, in the kindneſs of Boaz to Ruth, contemplate the kindneſs of Jeſus to poor ſinners; to whoſe meanneſs he moſt freely condeſcends, on whom though moſt unworthy, he liberally confers his benefits: and whom he neither upbraids himſelf, nor ſuffers others to upbraid with their former tranſgreſſions.

THEN

THEN Naomi her mother-in-law ſaid unto her, My daughter, ſhall I not ſeek reſt for thee, that it may be well with thee?

2 And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whoſe maidens thou waſt? behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threſhing-floor.

3 Waſh thyſelf therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyſelf known unto the man, until he ſhall have done eating and drinking.

4 And it ſhall be, when he lieth down, that thou ſhalt mark the place where he ſhall lie, and thou ſhalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou ſhalt do.

5 And ſhe ſaid unto her, All that thou ſayeſt unto me I will do.

6 And ſhe went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and ſhe came ſoftly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

8 And it came to paſs at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himſelf; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

9 And he ſaid, Who *art* thou? and ſhe anſwered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid; ſpread therefore thy ſkirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinſman.

10 And he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter; *for* thou haſt ſhewed more kindneſs in the latter end than at the beginning, inaſmuch as thou followedſt not young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requireſt: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman.

12 And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinſman: howbeit, there is a kinſman nearer than I.

13 Tarry this night, and it ſhall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinſman, well; let him do the kinſman's part: but if he will not do the part

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] We need not determine, whether this propoſal of Naomi, and the compliance of Ruth, were entirely free from blame, or not: certainly it was not recorded for imitation, and is not to be judged of according to the rules of modern decorum. If the propoſed meaſure had been of as ill appearance in thoſe days, as it would be with us, we cannot conceive that Naomi would have adviſed it, or Ruth complied with it: and whatever tenderneſs Boaz might have ſhewn on ſuch an occaſion, it would have formed a ſufficient reaſon for his refuſing to marry her. The law concerning a man's marrying his brother's widow when he died childleſs, extended, it ſeems to the other near relations, when there were no brethren. This law, and cuſtom gave Ruth, now proſelyted to the true religion, a legal claim upon Boaz, as Naomi ſuppoſed, who knew not of another nearer kinſman. It was cuſtomary for widows to aſſert this claim; (*Deut.* c. xxv. ver. 5—10;) and conſidering Boaz's character, and ſuperiority of ſtation, ſhe ſuppoſed that this was beſt done in a private manner. She deemed herſelf bound to promote this deſirable ſettlement for Ruth, and had an entire confidence in both her, and Boaz. And as Ruth ſuppoſed Naomi to be beſt acquainted with the laws, and cuſtoms of Iſrael, ſhe followed her counſel implicitly. Yet, when all allowances are made, perhaps neither party can be entirely exculpated. Their intentions were good, and the Lord prevented all bad conſequences.

V. 7. *And when Boaz*, &c.] When their work was finiſhed, it ſeems that he feaſted with his labourers; and, according to the ſimplicity, and hardineſs of the times, afterwards lay down to ſleep upon ſome couch prepared for him in the barn, or in an adjoining tent. It is ſaid "his "heart was merry;" but it may be tranſlated, "his heart "was good;" and be an intimation of his thankfulneſs for the plenty, which the Lord had ſent after the famine; and that his feaſt was conſiſtent with temperance, and piety, as his conſequent conduct proves it to have been. In the mean time Ruth concealed herſelf, till he was left alone, and then laid down at his feet waiting her opportunity of ſpeaking to him; and by that very action preferred her claim to be received into the marriage relation to him.

V. 9. *Spread thy ſkirt*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been a cuſtomary ceremony in contracting marriage, and implied the woman's being taken under the protection of her huſband, and admitted to ſhare all his comforts. This therefore was a direct claim upon Boaz to marry her; which ſhe grounded upon the law of God, and his being the neareſt relation of her deceaſed huſband.

V. 10—13.] The conduct of Boaz in this tranſaction is worthy of the higheſt encomiums. He attempted not to take advantage of Ruth's ſituation, and propoſal of marriage: he did not reproach her with the impropriety of her conduct; nor diſdain her, as a poor, deſtitute ſtranger; nor ſuggeſt, that ſhe was ſwayed by intereſt in preferring her claim: but, inſtead of ſuſpecting her of any ill inten-

of

of a kinſman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinſman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

14 And ſhe lay at his feet until the morning: and ſhe roſe up before one could know another. And he ſaid, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Alſo he ſaid, Bring the vail that *thou haſt* upon thee, and hold it. And when ſhe held it, he meaſured ſix *meaſures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and ſhe went into the city.

16 And when ſhe came to her mother-in-law, ſhe ſaid, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And ſhe told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And ſhe ſaid, Theſe ſix *meaſures* of barley gave he me; for he ſaid to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

18 Then ſaid ſhe, Sit ſtill, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in reſt, until he have finiſhed the thing this day.

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tions, he imputed her whole conduct to her affection to the family of Elimelech, and to Naomi; as if ſhe had thus ſhewn her greater kindneſs, than in coming with her into the land of Iſrael; and he commended her, for giving him, an elder man, the preference to younger perſons, whether rich or poor, Moabites, or Iſraelites; and for her regard to the law of God: and perceiving her confuſed, as is probable, upon the recollection of her ſituation, he obviated her fears, applauded her, as a woman of approved virtue, and made her a conditional promiſe of marriage, which he confirmed for her fuller ſatisfaction, with a ſolemn oath: and as ſoon as the morning arrived ſent her away with a preſent to her mother-in-law.

V. 14. *Let it not*, &c.] We may conſider theſe words as containing his reaſons for diſmiſſing her ſo early; for he ſaid within himſelf, "Let it not be known, that a woman "came into the floor:" or as his caution to Ruth, not to ſpeak of it to any one. For we do not find that there was any ſervant privy to the interview.

V. 16. *Who art thou?* &c.] Or what haſt thou done? What hath paſſed?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behoves aged perſons to recollect their younger days, and not to exclude young perſons from thoſe lawful ſatisfactions, of which themſelves have now given up all thoughts. Indeed we ſhould not make ourſelves a ſtandard for others, in any matter, which the law of God leaves to our choice; but ſhould, without cenſure, allow others in many things, which we deem inexpedient for ourſelves. The word of God hath pronounced marriage honourable in all; and therefore they, who from inclination, prudential regard to the intereſts of their families, a pious deſire of being more at leiſure, and having more in their power, for the ſervice of God, or through advancing years calling to prepare for the eternal world, chooſe to abide in a ſingle ſtate, ſhould not condemn thoſe, who may have as good reaſons for preferring a married life. If they are imprudent, they will have trouble in the fleſh, but their brethren ſhould ſpare them; and not cenſure what the word of God doth not condemn. (1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 14.) The married ſtate, when properly entered into, is a reſt, as much as any thing on earth can be ſo called; as it ought to fix the affections, and form a connection for life: and it therefore ſhould be engaged in with great ſerioufneſs, and with earneſt prayers for the direction, and bleſſing of God upon it, and with an eye to his precept, and Providence. And parents ſhould carefully adviſe their children in this important concern, "that it may be well with them," as to the intereſts of their ſouls. The more willing any one is, for conſcience ſake, to renounce wordly intereſts, the more ſhould others deviſe how to promote his advantage. But good intentions will not juſtify improper means: and it is well for us, that we have to do with a pardoning God, who takes better care of our intereſt, purity, credit, and peace, than we often do of our own, and of each other's. Parents ſhould be very cautious what injunctions they lay upon their children, leſt their regard for, and obedience to them, ſhould enſnare their conſcience, and lead them into temptation: for the authority of a parent will not juſtify a ſinful action. Few men have ſuch command of their paſſions, and ſuch candour of mind, as neither to injure the virtue, or the reputations of females, who indiſcreetly put themſelves in their way: and yet to take advantage of a woman's affection, and confidence, for her irreparable damage, is much baſer, than defrauding thoſe, who implicitly truſt in us. However they, who value either their chaſtity, or their character, ſhould flee from ſuch ſituations, in which they can only be preſerved by the ſame power, that preſerved the young men, in the fiery furnace. All our plenty ſhould be ſhared with the poor, and induſtrious: and all our feaſting ſhould be ſo moderated, that we may neither be unfitted thereby for our ordinary employments, nor for the exerciſes of devotion. And when in ſuch circumſtances, and on ſuch occaſions, men can retain the dominion over their paſſions, and conduct themſelves with tenderneſs, prudence, piety, juſtice, and regard to the law of God, though moſt powerfully tempted to ſin, their wealth may be pronounced bleſſed, and their uſe of it honourable. But we muſt not be content even with a clear conſcience in the ſight of God; but we ſhould endeavour to preſerve a clear character, and to avoid whatever may excite ſuſpicion in the minds of others, or open the envenomed lips of ſlander; and we ought to be as tender of other's reputations, as of our own. And in every undertaking we ſhould be diligent in uſing proper means, and then quietly leave the whole to the Lord's deciſion. But without any impropriety we poor, polluted ſinners may apply to Jeſus Chriſt, our neareſt kinſman, and our brother, as dwelling in human nature, to ſpread his ſkirt over us, and to eſpouſe our ſouls to himſelf, to take us under his almighty care, and to admit us to ſhare all his unſearchable riches. He will never blame us for doing this unſeaſonably, or condemn us for the imperfections of our application, if we deſire to be

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. Naomi's nearer kinſman refuſing to marry Ruth, v. 1—8. *2d. The marriage of Boaz with, and his ſon by Ruth, v.* 9—17. *3d. The genealogy of his family from Pharez to David, v.* 18—22.

THEN went Boaz up to the gate, and ſat him down there: and, behold, the kinſman of whom Boaz ſpake came by; unto whom he ſaid, Ho, ſuch a one, turn aſide, ſit down here. And he turned aſide, and ſat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and ſaid, Sit ye down here. And they ſat down.

3 And he ſaid unto the kinſman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, ſelleth a parcel of land which *was* our brother Elimelech's:

4 And I thought to advertiſe thee, ſaying, Buy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is* none to redeem *it* beſides thee; and I *am* after thee. And he ſaid, I will redeem *it*.

5 Then ſaid Boaz, What day thou buyeſt the field of the hand of Naomi, thou muſt buy *it* alſo of Ruth the Moabiteſs, the wife of the dead, to raiſe up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6 And the kinſman ſaid, I cannot redeem *it* for myſelf, leſt I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyſelf; for I cannot redeem *it*.

7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Iſrael, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to confirm all things: a man plucked off his ſhoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a teſtimony in Iſrael.

8 Therefore the kinſman ſaid unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee: ſo he drew off his ſhoe.

9 And Boaz ſaid unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, Ye *are* witneſſes this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabiteſs, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchaſed to be my wife, to raiſe up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye *are* witneſſes this day.

11 And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, ſaid, *We are* witneſſes. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine houſe like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the houſe of Iſrael: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.

12 And let thy houſe be like the houſe of Pharez, (whom Tamar bare unto Judah,) of the ſeed which the LORD ſhall give thee of this young woman.

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and ſhe was his wife; and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and ſhe bare a ſon.

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his: he will make the beſt of us, and all we do; and will take our love to him, and deſire of his ſalvation moſt kindly. And when we have applied to him, he will not reſt till he hath accompliſhed our deſires, and will in the mean time communicate bleſſings to us, and to ours in anſwer to our prayers. Nor can we too earneſtly deſire, and ſeek this ſame reſt for our children, and friends, that it may be well with them alſo.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—8.] Probably Elimelech's eſtate had been ſold, till the year of jubilee; but it could not be alienated from the family, (*Lev.* c. xxv. ver. 25—28.) The neareſt relation therefore had a right to redeem it by refunding the proportion of the purchaſe money; and as this would prove advantageous to him, he might be induced thereby to be kind to the poor family. As Elimelech had no ſurviving iſſue, it ſeems probable, that Ruth his daughter-in-law, was conſidered as entitled to his inheritance, according to the law given in the caſe of thoſe, who left only daughters, (*Numb.* c. xxvii.) But to obviate all doubt in this matter, Boaz propoſed to this kinſman of Elimelech's, that he ſhould both redeem the eſtate, and marry Ruth; in which caſe the eſtate would certainly belong to his eldeſt ſon by her: but if he was unwilling to do it, he deſired him to renounce his claim, and he would marry her, and redeem the land for himſelf, (*Numb.* c. xxxvi. v. 5—9.) But he was not willing to marry the poor widow, leſt he ſhould injure the circumſtances of his family, and he therefore reſigned all claim to the eſtate alſo. For this tranſaction reſpects all the ſeveral laws above referred to, and doubtleſs the whole was ſettled in the moſt regular, legal, and cuſtomary manner: and as the pulling off the ſhoe of the kinſman, was not done by Ruth, with the preſcribed ceremonies, it ſeems not to refer to the law about refuſing to marry a brother's widow, (*Deut.* c. xxv.

14 And the women ſaid unto Naomi, Bleſſed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinſman, that his name may be famous in Iſrael.

15 And he ſhall be unto thee a reſtorer of *thy* life, and a nouriſher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than ſeven ſons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her boſom, and became nurſe unto it.

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, ſaying, There is a ſon born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jeſſe, the father of David.

18 Now theſe *are* the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahſhon, and Nahſhon begat Salmon,

21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed.

22 And Obed begat Jeſſe, and Jeſſe begat David.

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v. 9, 10,) but to have been the cuſtom in transferring inheritances.

V. 14, 15.] Naomi was congratulated on this occaſion more than the reſt, as ſhe had the ruins of her family thus providentially repaired, and her old age ſolaced after the death of her huſband, and ſons, through her daughter-in-law, who had loved her, and been a greater bleſſing to her, than ſeven ſons. The piety of the language, and conduct of all parties on this occaſion, ſhould not paſs unnoticed.

V. 17. *Obed.*] This ſignifies either "a ſervant," or "ſerviceable;" either alluding to the low eſtate of his mother, when gleaning in the fields, which now belonged to her: or to the expected uſefulneſs of her ſon to his family, and to Iſrael. From him Chriſt deſcended; and peculiar bleſſings and honour redounded to Boaz, who had not diſdained the low eſtate of Ruth, but had paid due honour to his deceaſed relations, and their decayed family: whilſt the kinſman, who refuſed ſo to do, is not allowed a place for his name in the book of God, but it is diſgracefully conſigned to oblivion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Diligence in buſineſs, punctuality to engagements without unneceſſary delay, integrity, and fair dealing in the affairs of common life, not only adorn a profeſſion of godlineſs, but tend to proſperity in the ordinary courſe of God's providence. Men are generally ready to embrace opportunities of increaſing their eſtates, but few know the value of godlineſs: nor can it be expected, that they, who ſupremely value carnal things themſelves, will make a due eſtimate of ſpiritual excellency in the character of others. Such are frequently the wiſe men of this world, whom the Lord charges with folly; they attend not to the concerns of their ſouls, and reject the ſalvation of Chriſt, for fear of marring their inheritance! Nay ſelfiſhneſs not only obliterates from their breaſts all charity, and juſtice, but extinguiſhes natural affection, and cauſes them to treat with diſdain their neareſt relatives, however excellent, if they are poor, and need their aſſiſtance. But the loſs, in the final event of things, will be their own alone; the Lord will raiſe up other friends for thoſe, who love, and truſt in him; and eſpecially for thoſe, who have ſhewn themſelves willing to bear hardſhip for his ſake. Nay, ſuch perſons, however poor, are a bleſſing to all connected with them. Eſpecially they to be valued in the marriage relation: "a prudent wife is "of the Lord," and "the price of a virtuous woman is "above rubies;" (*Prov.* c. xix. v. 14. c. xxxi. v. 10;) unſpeakably more valuable, than one poſſeſſed of wealth, beauty, and every external accompliſhment, but deſtitute of wiſdom, and grace. As marriage is honourable in the ſight of God, it ought to be publicly contracted, and recognized, that it may be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe deeds of darkneſs, which require concealment: and it is then like to be comfortable, when the law of God is regarded, and the bleſſing of God is ſupplicated in entering into it. In this important concern, (as in all others,) the people of God ſhould pray for one another, that the parties may live together in peace, be good examples, do worthily in the church, and in the world, and train up families for future uſefulneſs, when they have ſerved their generations, and are fallen aſleep. The birth of children alſo calls for united prayers, that they may be indeed a comfort to their parents, bleſſings to ſociety, and bleſſed themſelves: for without the bleſſing of God none of theſe things can be expected: and the general diſuſe of ſuch pious language, and behaviour amongſt profeſſing Chriſtians too plainly ſhew that true religion is at a low ebb amongſt us. Yet we ſhould never promiſe ourſelves much comfort from any earthly object; for our heavieſt trials often ariſe from thoſe quarters, whence we expected moſt ſatisfaction; and our greateſt ſolace from thoſe, whence we expected none: and one true Chriſtian friend may be better to us, than all our children, and relations. But if theſe ſtreams are ſo refreſhing, what may we not expect from the fountain? Let us then look to Jeſus, our redeemer, who "though he "was rich, for our ſakes became poor;" and at the price of his ſufferings, both ranſomed our inheritance, and purchaſed us to be eſpouſed unto him in truth and righteouſneſs: not induced thereto by our worthineſs, or excellency, but by his own unfathomable love to our polluted ſouls. To this union he invites the periſhing ſinner: This relation to the poor deſpiſed believer he avows, and glories in. Let us then joyfully accept of his ſalvation, expect all our felicity from him, and devote ourſelves to his ſervice; and being bought with a price, let us glorify him with our bodies, and ſpirits, which are his; by obeying his commandments, imitating his example, and recommending him, and his ſalvation by word, and deed to all around us.

The

The First Book of SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

The First Book of the KINGS.

This Book, and that, which follows, have their name from the prophet Samuel; though only a part of this first Book could be written by him; and the penman of the remainder is not known. But when Samuel was raised up to be the judge of Israel a new epoch commenced; in him the government by judges terminated, and the regal government was introduced, in Saul first, and afterwards in David, whom Samuel by divine command anointed kings; and these books proceed no farther, than their reigns, and are an introduction to the following history of the other kings of Judah, and Israel. From the Vulgate Latin translation, they are also called the first, and second Books of Kings, and the following, the third, and fourth Books of Kings. The first Book contains the history of about eighty years, though the chronology cannot be exactly ascertained. Therein we find Israel under the government of Eli, the High Priest, and their affairs greatly disordered by the wickedness of his sons. We have an account of Samuel's being raised up to be their reformer, and deliverer, and of his character, and actions. The history proceeds in the advancement of Saul to be the king of Israel, and of his ill behaviour; in the anointing of David to be his successor, and of his character, and exploits, and of Saul's persecution of him, until his death opened the way for David to the throne; who was not only the ancestor of Christ, but an eminent type of him, both in his person, and his kingdom. Many things in this book are worthy of our imitation, and encouraging to the faith, hope, and patience of the suffering believer: there are also many useful cautions, which we should regard with peculiar attention; and many awful warnings, to deter men, from turning back from a religious profession, from yielding to the suggestions of pride, envy, and malice, or from using their authority, and influence in persecuting the servants of God.

Before Christ 1131.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. An account of Elkanah, and of Hannah, and Peninnah, his wives, v. 1—3. 2d. Elkanah's attention to the worship of the Lord; and Hannah's disquietude because of her barrenness, and the misbehaviour of Peninnah, v. 4—8. 3d. Her prayer, and vow, and consequent comfort, and Eli's discourse with her, v. 9—18. 4th. The birth of Samuel, and the performance of her vow, v. 19—28.

NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *An Ephrathite.*] Elkanah appears to have been a Levite, (1 *Chron.* c. vi. v. 26—28. 33, 34.) Ramathaim Zophim was the place, which is afterwards called Ramah, and Arimathea; and, from the plural number here used, is supposed to have been divided into two or more parts, upon different eminences; the word Zophim signifies watchmen, perhaps because some watch towers, and watchmen were stationed there, for Ramah, signifies exaltation: or it might be so called from Zuph, Elkanah's ancestor. Ephrath is the same as Bethlehem, and he was called an Ephrathite probably from being allied in the female line to some family of the tribe of Judah, whose inheritance lay there.

Before Christ 1131.

2 And

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worſhip, and to ſacrifice unto the LORD of hoſts in Shiloh: and the two ſons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the prieſts of the LORD, *were* there.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her ſons and her daughters, portions.

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had ſhut up her womb.

6 And her adverſary alſo provoked her ſore, for to make her fret, becauſe the LORD had ſhut up her womb.

7 And *as* he did ſo year by year, when ſhe went up to the houſe of the LORD, ſo ſhe provoked her: therefore ſhe wept, and did not eat.

8 Then ſaid Elkanah her huſband to her, Hannah, why weepeſt thou? and why eateſt thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten ſons?

9 So Hannah roſe, up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk: (now Eli the prieſt ſat upon a ſeat by a poſt of the temple of the LORD:)

10 And ſhe *was* in bitterneſs of ſoul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept ſore.

11 And ſhe vowed a vow, and ſaid, O LORD of hoſts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there ſhall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to paſs, as ſhe continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, ſhe ſpake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought ſhe had been drunken.

14 And Eli ſaid unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah anſwered and ſaid, No, my lord; I *am* a woman of a ſorrowful ſpirit: I have drunk neither wine nor ſtrong drink, but have poured out my ſoul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I ſpoken hitherto.

V. 3. *Yearly to worſhip*, &c.] The worſhip at Shiloh was kept up, but probably in an irregular manner, or Elkanah a Levite, would have had employment there. However in thoſe times of apoſtacy, and idolatry, when men abhorred the offering of the Lord, through the wickedneſs of Eli's ſons, it was commendable in Elkanah to go up, though but once a year, perhaps at the Paſſover, to worſhip the Lord. The Iſraelites were confined to one place, one altar, &c; and therefore Elkanah could not go elſewhere. But, though the wickedneſs of miniſters doth not deprive the pious Chriſtian of the bleſſing, nor furniſh a ſufficient excuſe for neglecting the ordinances of God; yet not being under a ſimilar limitation, we ſhould prefer attending on *their* miniſtry, who appear at leaſt to be walking heaven-ward themſelves, as well as teaching others the true way thither.

V. 5. *A worthy portion*, &c.] When Elkanah evidenced his affection for Hannah, who probably was his firſt wife, by the cuſtomary indications, the envy, and jealouſy of Peninnah, as well as her proud contempt of Hannah's barrenneſs, were excited, and great uneaſineſs was occaſioned in his family; for Hannah laid theſe things more to heart, than ſhe ought, and her perpetual ſorrow diſtreſſed Elkanah, and greatly interrupted the comfort, and benefit of the religious ordinances, on which they were attending. As this was the caſe from year to year, it was a ſtrong temptation to him to keep away: and it might be one reaſon why Hannah refuſed to eat of the ſacrifices; leſt being eaten in mourning, the Lord ſhould be diſpleaſed with her: (*Deut.* c. xxvi. v. 14. *Mal.* c. ii. v. 13.)

V. 8. *Am not I*, &c.] Elkanah remonſtrated with Hannah concerning her immoderate grief, and reminded her, that though ſhe had no children, ſhe poſſeſſed his affection; which would conduce more to her real comfort, than ten ſons without it would; and that therefore her ſituation was more deſirable than that of Peninnah. This gentle rebuke prevailed with her to repreſs her grief, and partake of the ſacrifice: but that did not comfort her heart, till ſhe had poured it out in prayer.

V. 14—16. *How long*, &c.] Perhaps Eli had many times ſeen ſuch abuſes, as he here charged Hannah with, in thoſe days of diſorder, and exceſs, and ſat near the tabernacle, (or temple, as it is called, being now ſtationary,) to repreſs ſuch enormities, though he did not adopt the only effectual method. Perceiving her great diſcompoſure, he too haſtily attributed it to drunkenneſs; which was faulty in him, and had a tendency to increaſe her diſtreſs: (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 13—15.) But Hannah had now obtained ſuch inward conſolation, that this ſevere reflection neither diſtreſſed her, nor excited her anger. And ſhe

17 Then

17 Then Eli anſwered and ſaid, Go in peace: and the God of Iſrael grant *thee* thy petition that thou haſt aſked of him.

18 And ſhe ſaid, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy ſight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *ſad*.

19 And they roſe up in the morning early, and worſhipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their houſe to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

20 Wherefore it came to paſs, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived, that ſhe bare a ſon, and called his name Samuel, *ſaying*, Becauſe I have aſked him of the LORD.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his houſe, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly ſacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for ſhe ſaid unto her huſband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her huſband ſaid unto her, Do what ſeemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD eſtabliſh his word. So the woman abode, and gave her ſon ſuck until ſhe weaned him.

24 And when ſhe had weaned him, ſhe took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the houſe of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

25 And they ſlew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And ſhe ſaid, Oh, my lord! *as* thy ſoul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that ſtood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I aſked of him:

28 Therefore alſo I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he ſhall be lent to the LORD. And he worſhipped the LORD there.

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calmly explained to him the real cauſe of her agitation; and declared her abhorrence of the crime, of which he ſuſpected her. In doing this, ſhe defined the nature of fervent prayer very emphatically: "I poured out my ſoul before "the Lord." For prayer doth not conſiſt *only* in uſing good words, but in opening before the Lord the inmoſt ſoul, and in unreſerved confidence pouring out before him all our fears, ſorrows, deſires, and purpoſes; as a child would before a loving father, from whom alone he had expectations of relief, and who, he was ſatisfied, was able and diſpoſed to help him.

V. 17. *Then Eli anſwered*, &c.] Though the character of Eli was very defective, yet there are many traces in it of true piety; and this anſwer is one. He was open to conviction, and willing to acknowledge himſelf miſtaken; and to make Hannah, when he underſtood her real character, amends, by his commendation, bleſſing, and prayers, for the injury, which he had done her.

V. 20. *Samuel*, &c.] That is, "aſked of God." This name would remind his mother, every time it was mentioned, of the Lord's kindneſs in remembering her affliction, and in anſwering her prayer.

V. 21. *His vow.*] Probably Elkanah had made a vow in caſe of Hannah's having a child, as well as conſented to that, which ſhe had made. The women were not commanded to go up to the ſanctuary, and Hannah had a ſufficient engagement at home.

V. 26. *That ſtood by thee*, &c.] Her heart was too full of joy, and gratitude, upon this occaſion, to recollect the injurious reflection Eli had caſt upon her: but ſhe well remembered her prayer, and vow, and the Lord's gracious anſwer. This was a proper uſe of the memory; though we are more apt to remember injuries from man, than mercies from God.

V. 28. *I have lent him*, &c.] It may be rendered "I have "returned him to the Lord," as from him I have received him. It was her intention, that, as a Levite, and a Nazarite, Samuel ſhould ſpend all his life in the immediate ſervice of the ſanctuary. But the Lord was pleaſed afterwards to employ him, as a prophet, and a judge in the public affairs of Iſrael.

He worſhipped, &c.] The Jewiſh writers ſay that Samuel was three years old at this time: but he was not too young to attend with reverence on the worſhip of God, and to give early indications of true piety.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

General experience evinces the kindneſs, as well as equity, of the original inſtitution of the divine law of marriage, and the fatal effects of deviating from it: for thereby men have marred their own comfort, and given riſe to domeſtic contentions, and to envy, malice, impatience, and every evil work, to the interruption of the worſhip of God, and the deſtruction of family religion. But none of our croſſes, and trials muſt be ſuffered to drive us from the ordinances of God; for if ſatan can induce us to yield to diſcouragement in one reſpect, he will make trial in another, and never ceaſe to haraſs us, when we are engaged in the duties of religion, till he hath driven us from every thing. Reſolute reſiſtance, and perſeverance, with earneſt cries to the Lord for his aſſiſtance, are our only ſucceſsful weapons: "give not place to the devil:" (*Eph.* c. iv. ver. 26, 27.) The human heart can neither bear proſperity without inſolence, or adverſity without impatience; both which imply rebellion againſt the precept,

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. Hannah's ſong of praiſe to God, v. 1. 10. 2d. Samuel's miniſtrations, his parents care of him, Eli's prayer for them, and Hannah's further fruitfulneſs, v. 11. 18—21. 26. 3d. The wickedneſs of Eli's ſons, and his too mild reproof of them, v. 12—17. 22—25. 4th. An awful meſſage to him by a prophet, v. 27—36.

or the providence of God. Inſtead of being contented and thankful in our appointed ſituation, and rejoicing in the happineſs of others, we are prone to murmur, and to envy, and to vex ourſelves, becauſe others are more favoured, or proſpered, than we ſuppoſe ourſelves to be: yet could we change conditions in every reſpect with them, we ſhould generally increaſe our uneaſineſs. And impartial reflection upon our own ſituation in life, compared with our unworthineſs, and the condition of others, would ſilence our complaints, or convert them into thankful praiſes. But all inordinate paſſions are irrational, as well as inimical to our comfort: and even godly perſons, who are ſhocked at the thought of yielding to ſome temptations, often rebelliouſly, and ungratefully indulge exceſſive grief; which they ſhould watch, and pray againſt. But if our earthly comforts, when duly eſtimated, are greater than our croſſes, and the one ought to conſole us under the other; ſurely the favour of God is better to his people, than all beloved relations, or outward ſatisfactions, and ſufficient to compenſate for the want, or the loſs of them all. Every one ſhould comfort thoſe, who are in bitterneſs of ſoul: yet a mild, and tender rebuke is frequently the greateſt kindneſs, when we ſee our friends forgetting their mercies, or their duty. Nothing can give ſolid comfort to thoſe, who are in anguiſh of ſpirit, but the experience of the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart; nor will that cordial in general be communicated, till they have poured out their ſouls repeatedly in earneſt ſecret prayer. All other comforts, and comforters give feeble and tranſitory relief; this alone is adequate, and effectual. Without this, even the ſacrifice, and interceſſion of the Saviour, the attendance on public ordinances, and every religious exerciſe, will communicate no peace or joy to the ſoul. But ſecret prayer, when earneſt, and importunate, brings a bleſſing upon, and puts life into them all: nor could a concurrence of all poſſible diſtreſſes, and temptations render that man miſerable, or long uncomfortable, who improves aright the precious privilege of acceſs to the mercy-ſeat of a reconciled God in Chriſt Jeſus. But through ſatan's temptations, and the evil of our hearts, we are often reluctant to begin, and ſlight in preſenting, and haſty in concluding our petitions. Hence it is that we go mourning all the day long, inſtead of caſting our burden upon the Lord: and our miſeries will increaſe upon us, till we take this courſe; and the more we experience the ſweet conſolations, which are thus communicated, whilſt the ſoul is poured out before the Lord, the more we ſhall determine to call upon him, "as long as we live;" (*Pſalm* cxvi. v. 1—4.) Amongſt the various trials, to which we are expoſed in this world, none is in general more bitter, than the unkind ſuſpicions, and unmerited cenſures of thoſe, whom we love, and eſteem: who judging by appearances, may undeſignedly condemn our beſt actions, as deeming them the worſt of crimes. But whilſt the Lord hears our prayers, and comforts our hearts, we may bear even this with patience, and anſwer it with meekneſs: for though it is painful to be counted a child of Belial by our brethren; yet if our loving Father ſees that correction to be needful for us, and favours us with the aſſurance of his acceptance, and the light of his countenance, we may thankfully ſubmit to his will. Even before thoſe bleſſings are vouchſafed, which we have aſked in prayer, or we are certain of obtaining them, the Lord ſometimes communicates theſe ſupports to the ſoul, that exceed every temporal advantage, that no outward trouble can deſtroy, and that give a reliſh for thoſe mercies, which before we undervalued, or overlooked. We are moſt likely to obtain our deſires, when we are rendered willing to ſubmit our wills to the will of God, whether we ſhall have them or not. And no temporal ſatisfaction can be durably comfortable, which we cannot name Samuel "aſked of the "Lord;" which we do not receive from him with gratitude, as an anſwer to our prayers, and uprightly deſire to uſe to his glory, and in his ſervice. And although in general it is better to ſubmit to the Lord's will, whether he pleaſes to give us children, or not: yet if he give them, we ſhall have the moſt comfort in them, when they are moſt entirely his; and therefore we ſhould devote them to him from the firſt, bring them up for him, and pray continually that we may ſee early proofs, that he hath received them into his family, and made them his, to ſerve him all their days. The vows, or prayers, that we have made in our diſtreſs, muſt be performed with gratitude, when our deſires have been granted; that others may praiſe the Lord with us, and be encouraged to truſt in, and call upon him. We ought to be very cautious how we condemn thoſe who are uncommonly earneſt in religion, as if they were guilty of hypocriſy, enthuſiaſm, or other iniquity: and miniſters eſpecially, in their zeal againſt ſin, ought to be very careful, that they do not grieve ſuch, as are in bitterneſs of ſpirit: but if we have raſhly cenſured thoſe, who are not faulty, we ſhould be ready to hear their plea, to retract our deciſion, to give them encouragement, and to aſſiſt them with our prayers. It becomes not the profeſſion of godlineſs to be ſoon weary of the ordinances of God; but to leave them reluctantly to attend on our other duties: and when men are in ſuch haſte to ſet out upon journeys, or to engage in buſineſs, that they have not time to worſhip God, they are like to proceed without his preſence and bleſſing. There are times, when domeſtic employments may render it a duty to be occaſionally abſent from public ordinances; but thoſe ſeaſons ſhould abound the more in the exerciſes of ſecret devotion: and when ſpecial bleſſings have been conferred, and reſtraints are removed, the true believer will go with more eager deſires to the courts of the Lord, to pay his vows, and render his grateful praiſe. With what tranſports of joy then will the true believer at laſt, leave this diſtant land below, to aſcend to the courts above, to receive the full anſwer of all his prayers, and to render everlaſting praiſes, with an uninterrupted flow of holy affections, and with ineffable delight!

AND Hannah prayed, and ſaid, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD; mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies: becauſe I rejoice in thy ſalvation.

2 *There is* none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beſide thee; neither *is there* any rock like our God.

3 Talk no more ſo exceedingly proud; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that ſtumbled are girded with ſtrength.

5 *They that were* full have hired out themſelves

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *Hannah prayed*, &c.] (*Luke*, c. i. v. 46—55.) The word prayer is ſometimes uſed for any act of devotion, whether it be confined to petition, or include thankſgiving, and praiſe, or chiefly conſiſts of the latter. When Hannah aſked Samuel, ſhe ſpake in heart, but her voice was not heard; for that matter lay entirely betwixt the Lord, and her ſoul: but when, according to her vow, ſhe preſented him to God, his glory, and the edification of his people required a public acknowledgment. Whilſt her heart was enlarged with love and gratitude, ſhe was led on by the ſpirit of prophecy, to deſcant on thoſe things, which relate to the diſpenſation of God's providence, and grace to Iſrael, to the church of God, and to the world at large, even in future ages to the end of time. "Her heart rejoiced," not in Samuel, though juſtly beloved, but "in the Lord," who had given him to her; in his power, faithfulneſs and love: as having ſhewn her this ſpecial favour, what might ſhe not expect from ſuch a friend? "Her horn," (which is the weapon for defence, and annoyance in animals,) "was exalted in the Lord, and her "mouth was enlarged over her enemies;" for being delivered from the provocations of her rival, ſhe took that as an earneſt of more important victories, and rejoiced in the hope of triumphing over the adverſaries of her ſoul; for ſhe expected, and rejoiced in the ſalvation of the Lord, and in the expectation of it's completion in glory; as well as of *His* coming, who is the whole ſalvation of his people.

V. 2. *There is none*, &c.] From theſe perſonal mercies, Hannah proceeded to contemplate the perfections of that God, from whom they were derived. His holineſs, which compriſes all thoſe moral excellencies, that are his glory, and beauty, ſhe firſt celebrated. Juſtice, truth, goodneſs, and mercy, with abhorrence of every thing inconſiſtent with them, are in the Lord alone, underived, immutable, and complete; "there is none holy as the Lord:" all created holineſs is derived, dependant, mutable, and ſcanty; all human holineſs, defiled with a mixture of impurity. Nay, ſays the propheteſs, "there is none beſide thee," none holy, no other God, and all creatures are leſs than nothing, and vanity in the compariſon with him, (*Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 15—17.) "nor is there any rock, like our God;" (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 4. 31:) he is the only protector, refuge, and ſupport: and they only are ſafe and ſtrong, who truſt entirely in him.

V. 3. *Talk no more*, &c.] If the propheteſs here at all noticed the boaſtings of Peninnah; ſhe certainly alſo meant ſomewhat much greater; and addreſſed as preſent the enemies of the church, who confiding in their numbers, ſtrength, courage, and conduct; and elated by ſucceſs, arrogantly gloried in themſelves, and inſulted over the deſpiſed ſervants of God. Theſe ſhe commanded to ceaſe from their proud boaſtings, and to remember, "that the Lord "is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." He diſtinguiſhes men's characters, and weighs their actions in the balance, and knows when to interpoſe in behalf of his people; for he knows, and approves of their temper and conduct, and will certainly plead their cauſe: he alſo knows thoſe, who deſpiſe, and hate him, and abhors their character, and will in due time effectually puniſh them, though for a ſeaſon they may ſeem to proſper.

V. 4—8.] The events which theſe verſes ſpeak of, are frequently called the viciſſitudes of blind fortune, whoſe fickleneſs, and capriciouſneſs are frequently railed at: but thy are indeed the reſult of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, with irreſiſtible power, and ſovereign authority executing the ſettled purpoſes of God, of manifeſting his own perfections of ſaving thoſe, who truſt in, and love him; and of pouring contempt upon all other diſtinctions, in which ungodly men confide, and glory. Are they proud of their valour, military ſkill, or bodily ſtrength? their bows ſhall be broken, and themſelves unaccountably cruſhed, by an inferior, and deſpiſed company. Do they glory in their riches, and riot in eaſe, and luxury, whilſt they deſpiſe, and oppreſs the poor? They are frequently impoveriſhed, and reduced to the neceſſity of hiring themſelves out for bread, whilſt the poor and hungry are ſurpriſingly advanced to affluence. Do any glory, (as Peninnah did) in the increaſe of their families, and deſpiſe thoſe, who remain childleſs? The providence of God can ſoon, by unexpected death reduce their numbers, whilſt the deſolate are as wonderfully increaſed. For the Lord gives life, and takes it away, as he pleaſes: the moſt vigorous are by the ſtroke of his hand brought down to the gates of the grave; and the feeble are unexpectedly reſtored to health, and ſtrength. Such viciſſitudes are often obſerved in men's circumſtances, and families, contrary to all the rules of probability, wherein capacity and induſtry are utterly unavailing to prevent adverſity; and have no hand in raiſing men to proſperity; even from the loweſt, and moſt abject condition, to the throne of glory. Such events occaſion ſurpriſe, and many attempt to account for them; but the truth is, that it is the Lord's doing. "The pillars of the earth are his, and he "hath ſet the world upon them:" and the ſame power, which firſt created, and eſtabliſhed the earth in it's ſettled courſe, without human help, and in ſuch a manner, as no human power can change; by his ſecret overruling providence does every thing, and ſhould be acknowledged in every thing: and all creatures, animate, and inanimate, rational, or irrational, willing, or unwilling, are his inſtruments: and not only thoſe intelligent agents, who obey his

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ſelves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceaſed: ſo that the barren hath born ſeven; and ſhe that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to ſet *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, and he hath ſet the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his ſaints, and the wicked ſhall be ſilent in darkneſs; for by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail.

10 The adverſaries of the LORD ſhall be broken to pieces; out of heaven ſhall he thunder upon them: the LORD ſhall judge the ends of the earth; and he ſhall give ſtrength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his houſe; and the child did miniſter unto the LORD before Eli the prieſt.

12 Now the ſons of Eli *were* ſons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

13 And the prieſt's cuſtom with the people *was*, *that* when any man offered ſacrifice, the prieſt's ſervant came, while the fleſh was in ſeething, with a fleſh-hook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he ſtruck *it* into the pan, or kettle,

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commands; but they, who follow their own devices, have all their attempts overruled to promote his ſecret wiſe, and righteous purpoſes. Theſe things are equally applicable to the diſpenſations of his kingdom of grace: wherein he reſpects not men's wiſdom, learning, greatneſs, or imagined excellency: but, paſſing by thoſe, who deem themſelves intitled to his regard, ſelects the vile, the poor, the fooliſh of the world, having taught them to feel their guilt, and miſery, and to value his free, and precious ſalvation: and thus he repleniſhes his church from the high-ways, and hedges, and "takes the poor from the duſt, and the beg-"gars from the dunghill, to ſet them among princes, and "to make them inherit the throne of glory," "according "to the eternal purpoſe, which he hath purpoſed in Chriſt "Jeſus our Lord:" (*Pſalm*, cxiii. v. 7, 8. *Eph.* c. iii. v. 11.)

V. 9. *He will keep*, &c.] His ſaints are thoſe, whom his grace hath ſeparated from a ſinful world, and ſanctified unto himſelf. "Their feet he will keep:" they ſhall be directed, and upheld in his ways; they ſhall not ſo ſtumble, as utterly to be caſt down; nor be ſo ſnared, as finally to be taken captive by their enemies; for the Lord being their guide, and keeper, will lead and protect them "in the midſt of the "paths of judgment," through this dangerous world to glory. But however ſinners may now boaſt, and fill the world with clamour, and confuſion, they will ere long be put to ſilence, and ſink ſpeechleſs under the divine ſentence of condemnation, into everlaſting darkneſs, and deſpair. "For by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail," either to injure the Lord's people, overturn the intereſt of true religion, or ſecure themſelves from merited deſtruction.

V. 10. *The adverſaries*, &c.] Whilſt the Lord's adverſaries ſhall be totally ruined, his church ſhall proſper, not only as it did under the government of David, his king, whom Samuel by his command anointed; but under the goverment of his ſon, the Meſſias, who hath all power given him in heaven, and earth, who ſhall go on conquering, till all the ends of the earth ſubmit to his mediatorial ſway; and until he come to judge the quick and dead, at his appearing; when all enemies ſhall finally be put under his feet, and his glory be diſplayed in their deſtruction, and in the complete ſalvation of his people.

V. 11. *The child did miniſter*, &c.] The Levites were not called to any of their peculiar ſervices, until they were twenty-five years of age; but Samuel being devoted to the Lord in an eſpecial manner, was from a child employed about the ſanctuary, in thoſe things, of which he was capable: and as he did this from a pious diſpoſition of mind, it was approved, and called "miniſtering unto the Lord."

V. 12. *They knew not the Lord*, &c.] The ſons of Eli had been brought up in the courts of the Lord, and inſtructed out of the law, and perhaps had ſome ſpeculative knowledge of divine things: yet being ſons of Belial, men of a rebellious, and diſobedient ſpirit, it is ſaid, that "they knew "not the Lord." They had not that acquaintance with the divine character, united to a diſpoſition of heart to love it's excellency, which are eſſential to true Godlineſs; nor *that experience* of his faithfulneſs, and loving kindneſs, which they attain to, who truſt in, and call upon him, and have real communion with him. For want of this knowledge of God, and through their ignorance, error, or inattention to theſe firſt principles of religion, all their attendance upon divine ordinances was from the firſt mere hypocriſy, and they gradually ran into more flagrant abuſes. Eli appears to have been a godly man, and probably ſet his ſons a good example in private life, and gave them good advice, and inſtruction: but he yielded to a natural timidity, and feebleneſs of mind, and ſhunned trouble, and exertion; by this diſpoſition he was induced to indulge his children too much, without uſing his parental authority to reſtrain, and correct them, when young: and he connived at many abuſes in the ſervice of the ſanctuary, till they became cuſtoms, and made way for greater abominations; and even then he did not exert himſelf as became the High-Prieſt, and judge of Iſrael to puniſh, and repreſs them. This one fault opened the way for all the enormities, and fatal conſequences, which followed.

V. 13, 14.] The prieſts had their portion allotted them by the law out of every ſacrifice; which was given them

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or caldron, or pot; all that the fleſh-hook brought up the prieſt took for himſelf. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Iſraelites that came thither.

15 Alſo before they burnt the fat, the prieſt's ſervant came, and ſaid to the man that ſacrificed, Give fleſh to roaſt for the prieſt; for he will not have ſodden fleſh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* any man ſaid unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat preſently, and *then* take *as much* as thy ſoul deſireth; then he would anſwer him, *Nay*; but thou ſhalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force.

17 Wherefore the ſin of the young men was very great before the LORD; for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

18 But Samuel miniſtered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when ſhe came up with her huſband to offer the yearly ſacrifice.

20 And Eli bleſſed Elkanah and his wife, and ſaid, The LORD give thee ſeed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the LORD viſited Hannah, ſo that ſhe conceived, and bare three ſons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his ſons did unto all Iſrael; and how they lay with the women that aſſembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

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after the burning of the fat, and before thoſe, who offered the peace-offerings, prepared to feaſt on their portion with their friends. In addition thereto, this cuſtom had crept in, and the people in veneration for the prieſthood had quietly ſubmitted to it; by which their appetites were gratified with greater variety, and their avarice, with an additional perquiſite; (*Iſa.* c. lvi. v. 9—12.)

V. 15, 16.] The ſons of Eli were not long ſatisfied with the cuſtomary innovation; but, whilſt they neglected, or poſtponed the duty of burning the fat, (which, typifying the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and being the appointed expreſſion of the officer's repentance, and faith, was eſſential to the acceptance of the offering,) they inſiſted upon having ſuch portions of the fleſh, as they choſe, that they might indulge their ſenſual appetite: and when any one conſcientiouſly, and mildly remonſtrated againſt ſuch an abuſe in the ordinance of God, though willing to yield every other point to them, their very ſervants were ſo inſolent, as to threaten to take it by force. Thus they "lorded it over God's heri-"tage," and "kicked at his ſacrifice, which he had com-"manded."

V. 17. *The ſin of the*, &c.] Their contempt of God, and of his ordinances, and the public diſhonour done to his name was very great; and their ſin was aggravated by their public character, and eminent ſtation: but it is eſpecially noted, that through them, "men abhorred the "offering of the Lord;" many were ſo prejudiced by their ſcandalous behaviour, as to think any religion, or no religion, better than the ſervice at the tabernacle, and ſo were tempted to, or hardened in their idolatry, or irreligion: others, who were better diſpoſed, would deem it unneceſſary to put themſelves to the trouble, and expence of going up to Shiloh with their ſacrifices, to witneſs ſuch enormities: and even they, who perſevered in their attendance, were ſo grieved, that they hated to go, and had no comfort in the ordinances of God. Thus the whole appointment of God was likely to be neglected, and forſaken, and general ignorance, ungodlineſs and profligacy to enſue. Yet we do not read that Eli reproved them for theſe things, or refuſed to feaſt with them upon thoſe portions of the ſacrifices, which they ſo ſacrilegiouſly obtained! for he ſeems to have been too indulgent of himſelf, as well as of them.

V. 18, 19.] The contraſt betwixt the child Samuel, and the wicked ſons of Eli, betwixt his docility, and early piety, is *intentionally* marked, by the accounts of them being thus interwoven. It was a trial of the faith of Elkanah, and Hannah to leave their ſon with ſuch abandoned prieſts; but they were performing a vow, and the Lord, with whom they truſted him, preſerved him from the contagion: and Eli was peculiarly pleaſed with him, and clothed him in a linen ephod, ſuch as the prieſts wore, and others occaſionally, in the ſervice of God, thereby denoting the great expectations, that he had from him. And his parents who perſevered in coming to the courts of the Lord, notwithſtanding abuſes, ſupplied him with every thing that he wanted, ſuitable to his ſtation.

V. 20, 21.] It ſeems that Elkanah, and Hannah, having ſo hopeful a ſon, though they ſeldom ſaw him, were ſatisfied without more children: but in the midſt of our cenſures of Eli, we have here ſomewhat to his praiſe: it appears that he really loved thoſe, who loved the Lord; and was ſo taken with the conduct of Samuel, and with the piety of his parents; that his heart was enlarged in bleſſing them, and in praying, that they might be recompenſed for devoting their only ſon to the ſervice of God's ſanctuary, by having more children: and his prayer in this reſpect was heard, and abundantly anſwered.

V. 22. *How they lay*, &c.] Theſe women, who aſſembled at the door of the tabernacle, are ſaid by ſome writers, to have dedicated themſelves by courſes to the ſervice of the ſanctuary, doing any work pertaining thereto, which belonged to their ſex: ſuch as ſpinning, weaving curtains, &c: and that by their attendance there the prieſts formed that acquaintance with them, which they abuſed to ſuch vile purpoſes. Their buſineſs at the door of the tabernacle, was doubtleſs profeſſedly of a religious nature; and perhaps they were not, at firſt, devoid of ſerious impreſſions: but when thoſe, who ought to have been their inſtructors in

23 And he ſaid unto them, Why do ye ſuch things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 Nay, my ſons: for *it is* no good report that I hear; ye make the LORD's people to tranſgreſs.

25 If one man ſin againſt another, the judge ſhall judge him: but if a man ſin againſt the LORD, who ſhall intreat for him? notwithſtanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, becauſe the LORD would ſlay them.

26 (And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and alſo with men.)

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the houſe of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's houſe?

28 And did I chooſe him out of all the tribes of Iſrael *to be* my prieſt, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incenſe, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the houſe of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Iſrael?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my ſacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honoureſt thy ſons above me, to make yourſelves fat with the chiefeſt of all the offerings of Iſrael my people?

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religion, uſed their influence to ſolicit them to wickedneſs, the moſt ſhameful conſequences followed. A more horrible abomination can ſcarce be conceived; and we ſhould hardly have deemed it credible, did not almoſt every age and place produce examples of the ſame ſhameful abuſe of religious profeſſion, to the great diſhonour of the goſpel, and to the hardening and rejoicing of the hearts of the oppoſers of it's ſacred truths.

V. 22—25.] This laſt enormity induced Eli to reprove his ſons; which he did in language very reaſonable, and ſuited to the caſe of thoſe, who though faulty poſſeſs a tender conſcience; but much too mild for ſuch atrocious offenders. Indeed no words ought in ſuch a caſe to have ſufficed: the execution of condign puniſhment upon them was abſolutely due to the inſulted honour of God, and in order to counteract, by the ſalutary example, the fatal effects of their crimes upon the minds of the people. To have finally excluded them from the execution of every prieſtly office, was the leaſt, that Eli, as the High-Prieſt, and the judge of Iſrael, ought to have done: and if he had remembered the words of Moſes, (*Deut.* c. xxxiii. v. 9,) and had honoured God more than his ungodly ſons, he would have done it: for there were prieſts enough without employing ſuch monſters of iniquity, in ſo ſacred a ſervice, and with ſuch fatal conſequences: and his neglect of this duty was chaſtiſed in the moſt terrible manner, in their deſtruction, with the ſlaughter of 30,000 Iſraelites, in the captivity of the ark, in his own violent death, and in the ruin of his family! However his words are worthy our conſideration: he endeavoured to convince them, that their conduct was notoriouſly evil, that their characters were publicly infamous, that religion was ſcandalized, and the Lord's people, in various ways, were made to tranſgreſs: that, if their crimes had only injured their fellow-creatures, the judge might have appointed a penalty, which being paid, or ſubmitted to, the guilt might have been taken away: or if their ſin had been of an ordinary kind, the prieſt, who was judge in ſuch caſes, having offered their ſin-offering, and intreated the Lord for them, they might have been forgiven. But their offence was ſo directly againſt the Lord, and ſo interwoven with their miniſtrations as prieſts, and was committed even in offering the ſacrifices for ſin; that, no expiation was appointed for ſuch preſumptuous crimes, no intreaty or interceſſion could be made for them; and none could dare to ſtand between them, and that wrath of God to which they were expoſed: for the interceſſion for ſinners with a holy God, is grounded upon the atonement of the promiſed Saviour, which the ſacrifices, which they had ſo horribly polluted, were intended to typify; (*Heb.* c. x. v. 26—29.) This ſeems to have been the meaning, which was couched under Eli's words, though, perhaps through his timidity, not very plainly expreſſed. Every wilful deliberate ſin contains ſuch ingratitude, rebellion, and enmity againſt God, and ſuch robbery, and contempt of him, that no creature could have dared to have intreated for a ſinner, if the Son of God had not expiated guilt with his own ſacrifice, and undertaken the office of mediator betwixt God, and man. But they, who ſin againſt that remedy, by perſiſting in the neglect, contempt, or abuſe of this great ſalvation, muſt periſh without help, and without mercy, and without any one, at the laſt, ſo much as intreating the Lord for them. Their caſe was indeed bad, for whom their own father could not intreat the Lord, though he had not reſolution to reſtrain, and puniſh them. It ſeems that they utterly diſregarded their father's reproof; for the Lord was determined to reſtore the honour of his own ordinances by executing ſignal vengeance upon them, and therefore he left them to total obduracy.

V. 27. *A man of God*, &c.] (*Judges* c. vi. v. 8—10.) This prophet, as moſt of thoſe in after ages were, was ſent an extraordinary meſſenger from God, to reprove the neglect, and wickedneſs of his ordinary miniſters, the prieſts. And this humiliating circumſtance, of a man of God being ſent to the High-Prieſt, and judge of Iſrael, was in itſelf a token of the Lord's diſpleaſure, and a preparation to his being further warned and reproved from God by the mouth of the child Samuel.

V. 29. *Honoureſt thy ſons*, &c.] As Eli was intruſted with authority, and bound by his combined offices to repreſs wickedneſs without partiality, and to maintain the worſhip of God in it's purity, he was deemed an accomplice in the crimes of his ſons, becauſe he connived at them; and was therefore with them accuſed of ingratitude for the ſingular favour, which God had ſhewn the family of Aaron in gene-

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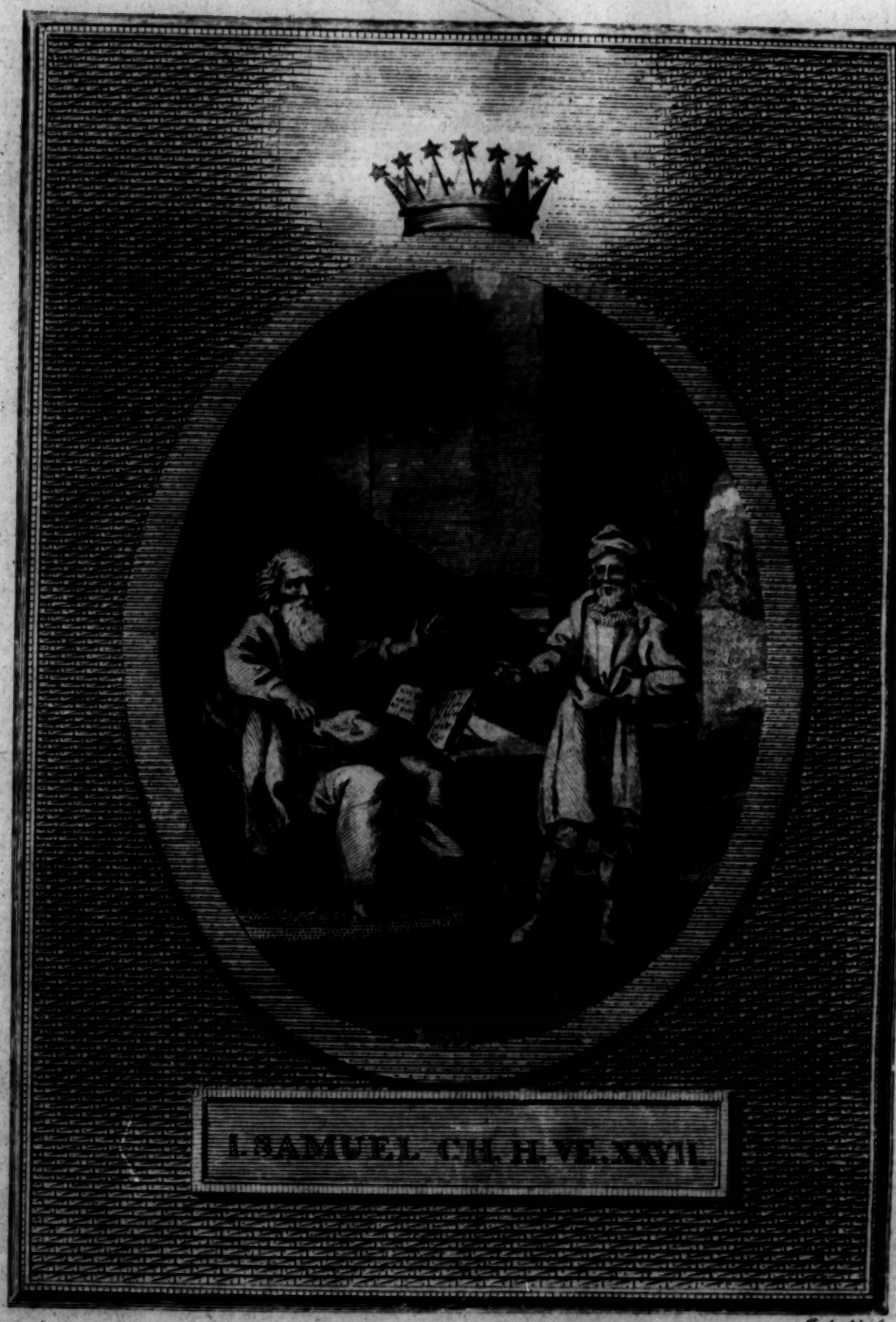

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30 Wherefore the LORD God of Iſrael ſaith, I ſaid indeed *that* thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father, ſhould walk before me for ever: but now the LORD ſaith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.

31 Behold, the days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's houſe, that there ſhall not be an old man in thine houſe.

32 And thou ſhalt ſee an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which *God* ſhall give Iſrael: and there ſhall not be an old man in thine houſe for ever.

33 And the man of thine *whom* I ſhall not cut off from mine altar, *ſhall be* to conſume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increaſe of thine houſe ſhall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto thee, that ſhall come upon thy two ſons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they ſhall die both of them.

35 And I will raiſe me up a faithful prieſt, *that* ſhall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart, and in my mind: and I will build him a ſure houſe; and he ſhall walk before mine Anointed for ever.

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ral, and their branch of it in particular; with "kicking at," and deſpiſing the ſacrifices, only regarding them, as the means of gratifying their avarice, and ſelf-indulgence, without any view to the glory of God, and the benefit of his people. All this aroſe from his partial regard to his ſons, whom he honoured, by continuing them ſtill in the prieſts office, notwithſtanding their crimes: nay he honoured them more than God himſelf, by preferring their ſafety, intereſt, and indulgence, to the glory of God, the honour of his ordinances and law, and the ſalvation of his people: whereas he ought not to have "known his own children," but to have diſregarded even their lives, and to have ſtifled all paternal tenderneſs, in his zeal for God, and his worſhip.

V. 30. *I ſaid indeed*, &c.] Eli was deſcended from Ithamar, the younger ſon of Aaron. It is not known why the High Prieſthood came to be tranſlated from the line of Eleazar, probably it was for ſome miſconduct; and perhaps the Lord had given a *conditional* promiſe that it ſhould continue in Ithamar's family, whilſt they continued to "walk before him in "true Godlineſs." But this promiſe was now forfeited by their crimes; and the Lord informed Eli, that office ſhould not be continued in his family; aſſigning a reaſon, of univerſal application, in the diſpenſations of God; "them "that honour me, I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me, "ſhall be lightly eſteemed." They, who chooſe the Lord for their portion, truſt him for their ſalvation, love him above all created objects, renounce worldly intereſts, and connexions for his glory, and count nothing too good to part with, too hard to do, or too ſharp to ſuffer for his ſake, and to promote his cauſe, ſhall be honoured by him, perhaps in this world, certainly in the world to come: but they who deſpiſe his authority, his favour, his frown, his ſalvation, his cauſe, or his glory; in compariſon of the intereſts, eaſe, credit, or pleaſure of themſelves, or their families, ſhall ſink into contempt in this world, or in the world to come, or in both.

V. 31—34. *I will cut off thine arm*, &c.] The Lord declared that he would impoveriſh his family, and reduce the remains of it to the moſt debaſed condition; with this peculiar circumſtance, that as Eli had in old age ſo miſbehaved himſelf, all his family ſhould die young. This began to take place, when the Philiſtines invaded, and plundered Iſrael, made dreadful havock, and took the ark of God, (thus as it were ſpoiling his habitation of the chief glory, and treaſure of Iſrael,) and ſlew his two ſons in one day. And had Eli lived to ſee the miſerable ſlaughter, which Saul made of his deſcendants; (c. xxii. v. 17—20;) and Abiathar's being depoſed by Solomon for treaſon, (1 *Kings*, c. ii. v. 27,) and the conſequent indigence, and miſery of his family, the ſight would have been painful to his eyes, and grieving to his heart.

V. 35. *A faithful prieſt*, &c.] This was fulfilled, when Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was made High-Prieſt, whoſe poſterity continued in that office during the reigns of the deſcendants of David, and concurred with the pious princes in promoting true religion; to whom the deſcendants of Eli, crouched and petitioned for the loweſt ſervice; not for love of the work, but out of mere indigence, and in order to earn the ſmalleſt wages, or meaneſt maintenance. The concurrence of the prieſts of Aaron's line, with the kings of David's family, whilſt they thus walked before the anointed of the Lord, to fulfil the will of the Lord, typified the union of the kingly and prieſtly offices in Jeſus Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The mercies, which we receive in anſwer to our prayers, ſhould not only be acknowledged with thankful praiſe, but ſhould lead us to rejoice in the Lord, as the fountain of felicity, and the God of ſalvation, and to anticipate with chearful hope, our complete deliverance from, and victory over all the enemies of our ſouls. From what the Lord hath done *for us*, we ſhould be led to meditate upon his glorious perfections, as diſplayed in all his works, but eſpecially in his dealings with ſinners, who hope in his mercy. An eſtabliſhed judgment, concerning his perfect wiſdom, power, love, and faithfulneſs, as exerciſed with ſovereign authority in all the adminiſtrations of his kingdom of providence, and grace; and an habitual regard to his operations in all theſe events, which take place through the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes, or rational agents, of whatever kind or character, will confirm our belief, that they, and they only are ſafe and happy, who truſt in him, and enjoy his favour; that the preſent ſucceſs, boaſtings, and confidence of the wicked will ſhortly iſſue in diſappointment, miſery, and deſpair; and the troubles of every humble believer, in triumph, and exultation. Vain and tranſitory are all other diſtinctions

36 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every one that is left in thine houſe ſhall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of ſilver and a morſel of bread, and ſhall ſay, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the prieſt's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

except that, betwixt the godly, and the ungodly, which will ſurvive, and ſwallow up all the reſt, and will endure to all eternity. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions "are weighed:" and he knoweth, and approveth his people, and he marketh with abhorrence the preſumptuous offender: with uncontrolable authority he diſpenſeth to every man, as he pleaſes; and in his own moſt wiſe, and gracious time, and manner, he will terminate the afflictions, and advance the comforts of his people, and overrule every event, for their good. In him let them therefore truſt, and to him ſubmit, and wait his time, and they ſhall acknowledge at laſt, that he hath done all things well. All the circumſtances of our life, and death are already appointed in the ſecret purpoſe of our God, and we ſhall live, however expoſed, till he pleaſes to take our breath; and then we muſt die, whatever efforts may be made to prolong our lives. As this unknown period cannot be far diſtant, our wiſdom and duty is to prepare for it; to make it our one great buſineſs to obtain the Lord's favour, and do his will: and then, we ſhall at length inherit the throne of glory, however abject our condition may be in this world. And though our path be dark, and ſlippery, and beſet with ſnares, and enemies, the Lord will keep our feet, and uphold our goings, by the ſame power, which eſtabliſheth the earth: nor can any power prevail againſt his ſaints, or prevent the deſtruction of his enemies. And may the Lord haſten that day, when his anointed prieſt and king ſhall eſtabliſh his authority, throughout the earth, upon the ruins of all oppoſition. Our gracious God accepts our thanks for mercies received, as prayers for further benefits; and when we offer him his own, he conſiders the ſervice as a loan, and as ſuch will recompenſe it. Out of the mouth of babes he can perfect his praiſe, and by their example expoſe the ſhame of thoſe ſons of Belial, who, with every advantage, know him not, and rebel againſt him. There is great encouragement given us to devote our children to the Lord in prayer, from their birth, yea from their conception in the womb, to bring them early to his courts, and to train them up in his ways; for, generally he takes ſuch children into his ſervice, and gives them that *ſpiritual*, and *experimental* knowledge of himſelf, which fortifies the heart againſt temptation, and is the ſource of all true godlineſs. The feeble attempts of children to ſerve God are noticed with condeſcending regard, as peculiarly pleaſing to him; and in all caſes, "where "there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what "a man hath, and not according to what he hath not:" and the grace of God is ſufficient for his feebleſt ſervants, in their proper place, though in the midſt of the worſt examples, and ſtruggling with the moſt powerful temptations. The neglect of properly educating children, and the indulgence of their wayward inclinations, is a ſin, which God ſeverely chaſtiſes in his own people: becauſe it ſeems to imply a contempt of his authority and ſpecial favour, and a diſregard to his glory, as well as to *their* immortal ſouls; and becauſe it tends to the moſt fatal abuſes, and apoſtaſies, and to the utter decay of true religion. None are generally more abandoned than the degenerate children of godly perſons, when they have broken through all the reſtraints of ſhame, conſcience, and regard to character: and thus the cauſe of godlineſs ſuffers in loſing thoſe families, which were it's ſupport, and in the prejudice, which their baſe conduct excites in the minds of beholders. And when ſuch children of Belial have been admitted into the ſacred miniſtry, and go on with the forms of godlineſs, for the ſake of the emoluments, or authority, whilſt they are real infidels, and profligates; they prove the moſt fatal enemies to the cauſe of God, and the moſt deſtructive murderers of the ſouls of men. Many they miſlead, but more they prejudice againſt all religion, and furniſh atheiſts, ſceptics, blaſphemers, and ſcoffers, with their moſt formidable weapons; they ſupply excuſes to the careleſs, and ſlothful; they diſcourage the hearts, and damp the zeal of thoſe, who are ſeriouſly diſpoſed, and cauſe even the Lord's people to tranſgreſs; they bolſter up the confidence of hypocrites, and by their enticements and examples tempt many to ſuch crimes, as they would otherwiſe have trembled to think of. Though we ſhould abhor the crimes of ſuch men; yet we ought not on that account to think the worſe of the ordinances, truths, or precepts of God's words; but by perſevering in a contrary conduct, we ſhould enter our proteſt againſt them, and evince the difference betwixt the name, and the reality of religion.—Abuſes in the ſervice of God, when once introduced, are ſoon ſanctioned by cuſtom, and conformed to without heſitation: and when wicked men have gained one point; for their own lucre, they will attempt another, and not ſhrink from the commiſſion of the baſeſt crimes, for the ſerving of their ſelfiſh purpoſes. In ſuch a caſe mild arguments, and gentle rebukes are feeble weapons: the coercive arm of authority ſhould impartially and deciſively interpoſe: for, though the magiſtrate muſt not uſe his ſword in matters of conſcience; yet he ought to uſe it in puniſhing atrocious immorality in perſons of every deſcription. However, if they eſcape with impunity, through the falſe tenderneſs, or partial negligence of thoſe, who ought to execute condign puniſhment upon them, they will not eſcape the vengeance of God: and wretched indeed is their caſe, who by their abuſe, or contempt of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, are excluded from the benefit of his interceſſion; and, who have ſo long hardened themſelves, as to be let alone of God to be hardened, becauſe he hath determined to deſtroy them. But when they, who have the grace of God in their hearts, yield to temptation, and repeatedly commit iniquity, the Lord will perſevere in his rebukes, and chaſtenings, till he hath brought them to repentance: and in this proceſs offenders will ſmart ſeverely; the diſhonour, which they have occaſioned to the name of the Lord, ſhall redound in diſgrace upon themſelves, and their families: the crimes, which they have connived at in others, through eaſe, ſelf-indulgence, or partial affection, ſhall be corrected in themſelves: their expectations ſhall be blaſted, their diſtinctions withered, their uſefulneſs precluded, and their honour laid in the duſt; or rather transferred to thoſe, who honour God: and perhaps the repeated and ſevereſt ſtrokes of the Lord's chaſtiſing rod, ſhall purſue them down to the grave. That improper regard to the intereſt of their families, which induces men to offend God, often proves

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. The Lord calling Samuel, and informing him of his purposes against the house of Eli, v. 1. 14. 2d. Samuel telling Eli of them, and Eli's submissive reply, v. 15—18. 3d. Samuel established to be a prophet of the Lord, v. 19—21.

AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went, and lay down in his place.

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the immediate cause of the ruin of their posterity; whilst that disregard to all personal, or relative interests, when the glory of God is concerned, which his word requires, forms the best method of promoting their welfare. Many of the Lord's offending people live to see terrible effects of their misconduct; but how would it grieve their hearts, if they could foresee all the future consequences of every kind, upon their families, upon the church of God, and in hardening sinners to their destruction! Let us endeavour to conceive of them, that we may be induced to greater abhorrence and dread of sin, and to more constant watchfulness and prayer: for these things were written for our warning, that we might more earnestly resist temptation, and strive against the beginnings of iniquity, and train up our families in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord. But whosoever misbehaves, or is degraded from the Lord's service, the work shall not be stayed for want of instruments: and though others have been, and are useful, and faithful, as servants, in their several generations; yet the Son of God is the faithful and merciful High Priest, who doeth according to all, that is in the heart of his heavenly Father, and whose priesthood shall be unchangeable and eternal. The meanest office under him, is great preferment; his pleasant service recompenses itself; he will here feed, and hereafter glorify all, who disinterestedly serve him: but the hirelings he will utterly exclude. May he furnish, and send forth many faithful ministers, who may seek his glory, and follow his example; and may he never henceforth suffer any, who resemble Hophni, and Phinehas, to prostitute the sacred ministry to their avarice, and ambition, or to disgrace it by their crimes!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *And the word of*, &c.] We have only read of the prophetess Deborah, and of two other prophets since the death of Moses, (*Ch.* ii. v. 27. *Judg.* c. vi. v. 8:) and they seem only to have delivered an occasional message, and to have retired; so that their names are not recorded. But in Samuel prophecy was openly established, and continued, after his days, for many ages in Israel. But before his days, "there was no open vision;" *i. e.* extraordinary persons raised up statedly to declare the will of God to the people by immediate revelation, were not openly known amongst them; so that any occasional discovery of it, was more precious in their estimation, than when prophecy was more common.

V. 3. *Ere the lamp*, &c.] The lamps of the golden candlestick ought never to have gone out: this appointment therefore was either neglected; or some other lamp was intended, which being lighted in the evening, went out during the night. Eli being old and infirm had laid down long before, but Samuel was just retired to rest, in some room near to Eli's chamber, whom he waited on, and to the tabernacle, about which he was daily occupied.

V. 4—6.] The Lord called him by name, in an audible voice, which he mistook for the call of Eli, who probably often disturbed him in the night, through the infirmities of old age. But when Eli assured him that he did not call him, he went again to his bed, and supposed that he had been mistaken; and this repeatedly: his humble diligence, and submissive respect for Eli should not pass unnoticed.

V. 7. *Not yet know the Lord*, &c.] Samuel was not unacquainted with the Lord in that sense, in which the sons of Eli knew him not; but he did not know his manner of making his will known to the prophets; and was not therefore sensible that this was the voice of God: but the Lord overruled his mistake, to make Eli acquainted with his intentions of revealing himself to Samuel, and to excite his inquiry about it.

V. 9. *That thou shalt say*, &c.] Eli could not but consider this preference shewn to a child, before himself, and his family, as a severe, and humiliating rebuke to him; especially as he was aware that it was a message from the Lord to himself, denouncing judgments upon him, and his

10 And the LORD came, and ſtood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel, Then Samuel anſwered, Speak, for thy ſervant heareth.

11 And the LORD ſaid to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Iſrael, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it ſhall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform againſt Eli all *things* which I have ſpoken concerning his houſe: when I begin, I will alſo make an end.

13 For I have told him, that I will judge his houſe for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: becauſe his ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not.

14 And therefore I have ſworn unto the houſe of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's houſe ſhall not be purged with ſacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the houſe of the LORD: and Samuel feared to ſhew Eli the viſion.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and ſaid, Samuel, my ſon. And he anſwered, Here *am* I.

17 And he ſaid, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath ſaid unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do ſo to thee, and more alſo, if thou hide *any* thing from me, of all the things that he ſaid unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he ſaid, It *is* the LORD; let him do what ſeemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Iſrael, from Dan even to Beerſheba, knew that Samuel *was* eſtabliſhed *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himſelf to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

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houſe: yet without envy, reſentment, or impatience, he gave Samuel directions, how to behave upon the occaſion!

V. 10. *And ſtood, and called*, &c.] This ſeems to imply that there was a viſible appearance, as well as an audible voice: it is alſo mentioned that the name Samuel was twice repeated; and that Samuel omitted the word "Lord," in anſwering, as Eli had inſtructed him, probably through uncertainty, and timidity.

V. 11. *Shall tingle.*] The very report ſhould ſo affect the hearer, as to continue to thrill in his ears, long after; as very loud, and ſtupendous noiſes are uſed to do.

V. 12. *When I begin*, &c.] This meſſage was probably ſent to Eli ſome years before his death, and tradition reports that Samuel was at this time only twelve years of age. The forbearance of God tended to harden the hearts of Eli's ſons, in preſumptuous expectations of impunity: but the Lord aſſured them, that though he waited ſome time before he began, yet when the appointed period arrived, he would fully execute all his threatened vengeance.

V. 14. *Purged*, &c.] The ſins of individuals of Eli's houſe might be pardoned, through the ſacrifice of Chriſt, if they repented, and believed, for their ſalvation from eternal puniſhment: but the Lord had irrevocably determined, that no number of ſin-offerings, ſhould prevail with him to continue that family in the High-Prieſthood, or to deliver them from the awful temporal judgments, which had been denounced againſt them; as perhaps both Eli and his ſons had hoped would be the caſe.

V. 15. *Opened*, &c.] Early in the morning, Samuel opened the gates of the court of the tabernacle, into which the people came to worſhip, as if nothing had occurred; neither elated with the diſtinction, nor neglecting his buſineſs, nor mentioning the matter, nor ſhewing any diſreſpect to Eli; but rather through his great reſpect and affection for him, being reluctantly afraid to inform him of the diſtreſſing meſſage.

V. 18. *It is the Lord*, &c.] Eli, in this remarkable anſwer to ſo awful a denunciation, delivered to him in ſo humiliating a manner, adverted to the ſovereignty, juſtice, wiſdom, truth, and goodneſs of God; acknowledging that he had a right to do as he ſaw good, and being aſſured that he would do nothing wrong. He was conſcious that he deſerved the awful ſentence, and acquieſced in the will of God, caſting himſelf entirely upon his mercy. The meekneſs, patience, and humility contained in theſe words are very admirable; and ſatisfy the mind, that he was truly penitent: though in his old, and infirm age, he had not courage, vigour of mind, or even authority, to execute puniſhment upon his ſons, who would now ſet him at defiance.

V. 19—21.] Samuel, it ſeems, was after this immediately and frequently favoured with revelations from God to the people, which were punctually accompliſhed, and made very uſeful: and therefore his appointment to be the prophet of the Lord was known, and acknowledged, throughout the land.—"By the word of the Lord," may either mean, by an audible voice from God to him, or by the appearance of him, whoſe name is called "The Word "of God."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Men are ſeldom duly ſenſible of the value of their mercies, till they are convinced of it by the want of them. And this perverſity operates even in matters pertaining to religion: we, who are favoured with the written word, and with the public preaching of the goſpel, in plenty, and by miniſters of varied talents, and endowments, can ſcarce conceive the value, that our fore fathers, in days of ignorance, and perſecution, put upon a Bible, or upon the opportunity of hearing a faithful ſermon: and which many ſtill put upon them in different parts of the world. This humbling reflection ſhould teach us to be thankful for and to improve our privi-

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Israel worsted by the Philistines, and sending for the ark; their total defeat with terrible slaughter, the death of Eli's sons, and the taking of the ark, v. 1—11. *2d. The tidings carried to Eli, his fall, and death, with that of the wife of Phinehas in childbirth, and the name that she gave her son, v.* 12—22.

AND the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the cove-

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leges, lest the Lord should shew us their preciousness, by depriving us of them. The Lord disposes of his special favours in holy and wise sovereignty, without confining himself to age, station, or office in his church; but he orders every thing for their correction, who offend him, and to honour those, who honour him. Docility, diligence, respectful submission to superiors, and an humble, self denying disposition in youth, are happy indications, of an honourable, and useful life: and they, who reduce to practice what they have been already taught, shall be favoured with further discoveries of the Lord's truth, and will: and where the heart is upright, mistakes and infirmities will be pardoned, rectified, and over-ruled for good. Those spiritual gifts are like to be useful, which are accompanied with humility, and a willingness to be serviceable in the meanest situation, and to behave with due respect to superiors, though faulty, and under divine rebukes. However no deference to men, because superior in every respect to themselves, must influence those, whom the Lord employs, as his messengers, to conceal, or to mutilate their message. And they are most unwise in their spiritual concerns, who wish to be flattered: nay, who do not desire above all things to know the whole of the revealed will of God, and the worst of their own state and case: for though temporal punishment may be unalterably determined; yet, blessed be God, the blood of Jesus cleanses the believer's soul from all sin, and assuredly delivers him from eternal misery: and Jesus casts out none that come to him, however vile they have heretofore made themselves. Presumptuous hopes of impunity, because the Lord is long-suffering, ruin multitudes, who postpone repentance till God hath sworn in his wrath, that they shall not enter into his rest; and when he begins to take vengeance, he will also fully execute his most tremendous threatenings. And if temporal sufferings may be so terrible, as to cause the ears of all, who hear of them, to tingle, what will be the everlasting punishment of the wicked? For men *make themselves* vile by their sins, but God reduces them to an abject state of misery for their sins. Let us then humble ourselves before him, before the door of mercy be for ever shut; let us accept of his chastisement, however sharp; let us submit to the Lord, because he is a mighty sovereign, and because he is perfectly wise, righteous, and merciful; let us cast ourselves upon his mercy, and seek for his salvation; and study to shew our repentance, not only by good words, but by good works; by restraining others from sin, as well as avoiding it ourselves, and by faithfully improving every talent committed to us. Then, though the infirmities of old age disable us for usefulness, and though we meet with many humiliating dispensations, we may rejoice to see others like to be useful when we are gone; and willingly impart to them the best counsel we are able, though their rising reputation be attended with our dishonour. And even if the prospect for our families be gloomy, we may encourage ourselves in the hope of that state, where the "wicked shall cease from "troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *And the word*, &c.] This may either mean the word, which the Lord had spoken to him, concerning the ruin of Eli's family; or the word, which from time to time the Lord sent by him to the people, declaring his will, and calling them to repentance: these things they heard with attention, throughout the land, but were not duly influenced by them. According to the conjectural calculation of chronology before given, (*note, Jud.* c. xiv. v. 1;) it was supposed that the first six years of Eli were coincident with the last of Samson: according to which the several events have been dated: some have supposed that all the time allotted to Eli was coincident with that of other judges, and that this battle was fought immediately after Samson's death: but this is very improbable. Others have not allowed of any coincidence, either in this case, or that of Tola and Jair; (*Jud.* c. x.) But if we allow of none, we must begin the forty years, which the apostle mentions as the date of Saul's reign, from the death of Eli; (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 21.) But *Samuel* does not appear to have been publickly acknowledged as judge, till twenty years after that event: (c. vii. ver. 2.) There are great difficulties in reconciling the different accounts, which it is not intended to enter upon, except very briefly upon the texts, in which they occur.

V. 3. *Wherefore*, &c.] The elders of Israel seem to have been miserably sunk in ignorance, and formality; and no wonder, when impiety was so prevalent in the courts of the Lord. Though ripe for terrible judgments, they had no idea that this rebuke was intended, as a warning to repent; but proposed a very foolish expedient, to secure the assistance of Jehovah. Whether it were allowable on any occasion to carry the ark of the covenant into the field of battle or not: (c. xiv. ver. 18. 2 *Sam.* c. xi. v. 11:) it cannot admit of a doubt, but that they acted very wickedly in this matter. They had heard what wonders had formerly been wrought for Israel, when this symbol of Jehovah's

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nant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may ſave us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people ſent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hoſts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two ſons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Iſrael ſhouted with a great ſhout, ſo that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philiſtines heard the noiſe of the ſhout, they ſaid, What *meaneth* the noiſe of this great ſhout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they underſtood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7 And the Philiſtines were afraid; for they ſaid, God is come into the camp. And they ſaid, Woe unto us! for there hath not been ſuch a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who ſhall deliver us out of the hand of theſe mighty Gods? theſe *are* the Gods that ſmote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderneſs.

9 Be ſtrong, and quit yourſelves like men, O ye Philiſtines, that ye be not ſervants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourſelves like men, and fight.

10 And the Philiſtines fought, and Iſrael was ſmitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a very great ſlaughter: for there fell of Iſrael thirty thouſand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken, and the two ſons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were ſlain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the ſame day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli ſat upon a ſeat by the way-ſide, watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came unto the city and told *it*, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noiſe of the crying, he ſaid, What *meaneth* the noiſe of this tumult? and the man came in haſtily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not ſee.

16 And the man ſaid unto Eli, I *am* he that

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preſence, was, *by his command*, carried before the people, under the care of *holy men*, who *truſted in, and glorified* God; and when Iſrael was *comparatively* an obedient people, fighting under the banner of the Almighty: and they diſcerned not between the outſide ſymbol, and the real inviſible preſence of God. They even made an idol of the ark; and imagined that by fetching it into the army, of their own accord, without conſulting the Lord, when carried by two ſons of Belial, who were doomed to deſtruction, and whoſe touch polluted the ark, and whoſe preſence brought a curſe into the camp, (*Joſh.* c. vii:) without any humiliation before God, or amendment of life, they could induce him to fight for them, though he was evidently contending againſt them. But he would not countenance their hypocriſy, and preſumption; for he could employ other methods of preſerving, and diſplaying the honour of the ark, and of his own inſtitutions.

V. 4, 5. *The two ſons*, &c.] Probably theſe wicked men did not ſo much as aſk the conſent of their aged father on this occaſion, whoſe heart foreboded the fatal conſequences. But they were hardened to their deſtruction, and were left to venture preſumptuouſly into the holy of holies, and to carry the ark into the army: and thus, without any proper call, they were found within the reach of the ſword of the Philiſtines, by which they were deſtined to be ſlain. Doubtleſs they were much pleaſed with, and proud of the office, of coming in as the ſuppoſed deliverers of Iſrael, bearing the ark of the covenant. And when they entered the camp, the whole army were infatuated with the ſame groundleſs preſumption; which only tended to render them more negligent of their proper duty, and more remiſs in their military arrangements; as if God were now engaged to fight for them, however wicked, and careleſs they were.

V. 7. *God is come*, &c.] No wonder the Philiſtines confounded all the diſtinctions betwixt the ark, and that inviſible God, whoſe preſence with *his believing* people it denoted; when the Iſraelites entirely overlooked them. It ſeems the Philiſtines, though idolaters, and enemies to the worſhippers of Jehovah, had at times ſome apprehenſions that he was the true God, and above all others; but thoſe were only tranſient convictions, not grounded upon true faith, and therefore they excluded not the hope of gaining the maſtery, and tended on this occaſion to increaſe their intrepidity, and reſolution. They ſpake of the works of Jehovah in Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, in language, very expreſſive of their partial information, and confuſed apprehenſions of them.

V. 13—18. *His heart trembled*, &c.] Though Eli had been ſinfully indulgent to his ſons, and had abundant reaſon to expect to hear of their death, as well as of the defeat of Iſrael; yet his chief anxiety was about the ark of God. Accordingly he bare the tidings of Iſrael's calamity, and of the death of his ſons, in the midſt of their unrepented crimes, with apparent fortitude, and reſignation; but when he heard that the ark of God was taken,

came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines: and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people; and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy: and he had judged Israel forty years.

19 And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her, said unto her, Fear not, for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.

21 And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: (because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law, and her husband:)

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.

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the reflection upon the dishonour to God, and to religion, and the dreadful loss to his people, which his negligence had occasioned, was more than he could support; and he fell down in a swoon, and his neck brake and he died. Thus expiring in so terrible a manner, under the rebuke of God, he formed, and still forms an useful warning to others: and yet, even in the manner of his death, he testified his supreme regard to the honour of God, and the interests of religion, above all personal, and relative considerations; and with all his faults he fell in, and even by a lively exercise of love to God, and his ordinances.

V. 19—22.] The wife of Phinehas also, though married to so wicked a priest, appears to have been a person of eminent piety. The death of her father-in-law, and of her husband contributed to hasten her death; but her dying regret was for the captivity of the ark, and the departure of the glory from Israel; for with her parting breath she named her son Ichabod, or "where is the glory?" In this her judgment was right; the presence, and ordinances of the Lord were the chief glory of Israel; and the loss of them was the departure of the glory. But if she supposed that the Lord had finally departed from Israel, she was under a mistake. From Shiloh the ark, the glory of Israel, was finally removed, with every indication of deep displeasure; for probably the inhabitants of that city had too much resembled the abandoned priests, (*Psalm* lxxviii. v. 59—68. *Jer.* c. xxvi. v. 6.) But it was restored to Israel, and established elsewhere; nor was the ruin of Eli's family, the destruction of the Aaronic priesthood. However these were events, which must make the ears of all, who heard of them to tingle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the judgments, denounced in the word of God, do not bring sinners to repentance, their speedy execution may be expected. The nearer any persons are to the Lord in profession, and the more privileges they are favoured with, the more certain, and dreadful will be their punishment, if they thence take encouragement to commit iniquity. Unhumbled professors of religion are apt to think, that they are entitled to help from God, because they are called by his name, though they disgrace it with their crimes; and to murmur at those rebukes, by which they are warned to repent of their sins, and to amend their lives. As their dependance is placed upon their external forms, the increase of their hypocrisies bolsters up their presumptuous hopes, and they often take the name of the Lord in vain, and dishonour his ordinances more, in attending on them, than they could do by neglecting them: so that he abhors those services, for which they expect his favour: but he will rather let his avowed enemies triumph for a season, than encourage such hypocrites, whose crimes still more dishonour his holy name; and all their forms will only serve to lull them into a fatal security, and precipitate their ruin. The most avowed infidels and atheists, and the most atrocious, and desperate offenders, have their pangs of conviction, and disquietude of mind; and with all their efforts they cannot utterly exclude forebodings of fatal effects from their contempt of, and rebellion against the God of heaven: and though they conceal, stifle, and get rid of this apprehension for a time, and may even prosper in their ungodliness; yet their fear will come upon them, and even worse than they ever foreboded. Whilst the impenitent are consigned to final ruin; the offending servants of God, who tremble at his judgments, and for the dishonour, which they have occasioned to his name, may die in an awful manner, without comfort, for a warning to those, who are left behind: yet when death in it's most formidable shape finds men, humbled for their sins, crying for mercy, and more anxious for the cause of God and truth, than for the most idolized creature comforts, it will eventually prove a blessing; yea every dispensation is in mercy, which rescues the immortal soul from hell. What miseries do some ungodly men entail upon all those, who are connected with them! And what an awful lesson is here for parents, who are tempted to connive at the first appearances of vice in their children! Let them reflect on Eli's death, of his sons more fatal end, of Phinehas' wife, of the slaughter of Israel, of the ark taken captive, the glory departed, and Shiloh forsaken; and let them tremble to think "how great a matter

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. The ark of God placed in the temple of Dagon, v. 1—2. 2d. Dagon falling before it, and broken in pieces, v. 3—5. 3d. The Philiſtines by ſore judgments made weary of the ark, v. 6—12.

AND the Philiſtines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Aſhdod.

2 When the Philiſtines took the ark of God, they brought it into the houſe of Dagon, and ſet it by Dagon.

3 And when they of Aſhdod aroſe early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and ſet him in his place again.

4 And when they aroſe early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, *were* cut off upon the threſhold; only *the ſtump of* Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the prieſts of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's houſe, tread on the threſhold of Dagon in Aſhdod unto this day.

6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Aſhdod, and he deſtroyed them, and ſmote them with emerods, *even* Aſhdod, and the coaſts thereof.

7 And when the men of Aſhdod ſaw that *it was* ſo, they ſaid, The ark of the God of Iſrael ſhall not abide with us: for his hand is ſore upon us, and upon Dagon our God.

8 They ſent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philiſtines unto them, and ſaid, What ſhall we do with the ark of the God of Iſrael? And they anſwered, Let the ark of the God of Iſrael be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Iſrael about *thither*.

9 And it was *ſo*, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was againſt the city with a very great deſtruction: and he ſmote the men of the city, both ſmall and great, and they had emerods in their ſecret parts.

10 Therefore they ſent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to paſs as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried

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"this apparently little fire hath kindled!" "In the midſt "of life we are in death;" but ſome ſituations peculiarly remind thoſe placed in them, to be ready for a ſudden call, and few more than pregnancy. But they, who belong to the Lord, need not deſire to ſurvive, when the ordinances of God are withdrawn, and the cauſe of God is run down: little comfort can they take in their children, or even in life itſelf, in ſuch circumſtances: yet even ſuch trials ſhall prove bleſſings, where the ark, and cauſe of God are thus dear to the heart. And though the glory may be withdrawn from one ſinful nation, city, or village after another; yet it ſhall never depart from Iſrael, but ſhall ſhine forth in one place, when it hath been eclipſed in another: for Jeſus, our High Prieſt, ever liveth to maintain his own cauſe, and the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt his church; whatever may be the triumphing boaſts of his enemies, or the deſponding fears of his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 2. *They ſet it by Dagon.*] The Philiſtines placed the ark beneath Dagon in his temple, as a trophy of their victory by his ſuppoſed aſſiſtance, over the God, and people of Iſrael, (*Judges* c. xvi. v. 23, 24.) But as they did not deſtroy it, as Iſrael had deſtroyed the images of the Canaanites, nor ſhew it any other tokens of contempt, it hath been conjectured, that they alſo intended to have worſhipped it, in conjunction with, and ſubordination to their former idol.

V. 3—5. *Dagon was fallen*, &c.] Though the workmen doubtleſs had taken care to faſten up the image to keep it from falling, (*Iſaiah* c. xli. v. 7;) yet in the morning they found it proſtrate before the ark, as utterly unable to withſtand the power of the God of Iſrael: but attributing this to ſome accident, they ſet the image again in his place; and the next morning, when they aroſe early to pay their devotions, they found it fallen, and broken to pieces. The image of Dagon is ſuppoſed to have been framed above like a man, and beneath like a fiſh; but when the head, and hands were broken off, a deformed trunk alone remained. By this the utter helpleſſneſs, and inſenſibility of the dumb idol were made apparent; and alſo the comparative weakneſs and folly of thoſe evil ſpirits, who thus courted worſhip to themſelves: and yet the Philiſtines, as if they were as ſenſeleſs, as their idol, inſtead of learning to deſpiſe ſo contemptible a ſtock, and worſhipping the God of Iſrael, revered as ſacred the very threſhold, on which their idol, had been diſgraced, and broken; and thus perpetuated the memory of Jehovah's triumph, by their own fooliſh ſuperſtition! And they either continued to worſhip the ſtump of Dagon, or got a new image of him formed, as ſoon as poſſible.

V. 6—12.] The Philiſtines, not being by this defeat of their idol convinced of their folly in attempting to impriſon the ark of the God of Iſrael, were next ſmitten with ſore judgments, by which multitudes died, (v. 12;) and others were afflicted with emerods, ſuppoſed to be of the nature of the piles, very dreadful, and general amongſt all thoſe, who eſcaped death. By theſe judgments, they were rendered

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out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that died not were smitten, with the emerods; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. The manner, in which the Philistines dismissed the ark with presents, and it's conveyance to Beth-shemesh, v. 1—12. 2d. It's reception there with joy, and sacrifices, v. 15—18. 3d. The sin, punishment, and terror of the Beth-shemites, v. 19—22.

AND the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

desirous of getting rid of the ark, but were not induced to renounce their idolatry, or to worship Jehovah. Thus, whilst Israel was punished for their hypocrisy, and wickedness, and were become so basely degenerate as not to attempt the recovery of the ark of the Lord, and indeed were unworthy of being employed in such a service; Jehovah vindicated his own glory, and made the captivity of the ark the occasion of exposing idolatry to contempt, and of convincing his enemies that his instituted worship could not be profaned with impunity. (*Psalm* lxxviii. v. 65, 66.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord may for a season permit his cause to be run down, in order to expose the hypocrisy, to undermine the vain confidence, or to chastise the wickedness of his professed people: for he knows how, without any human help, and in defiance of all enemies, to recover it from the ruins, and to establish it in greater splendour. But the short-lived triumphings of the wicked on such occasions will issue in their greater contempt, and punishment. Men may be convinced by the judgments of God, that he is a terrible enemy, and that it is in vain to contend with him, and may be constrained to render him a feigned submission; (*Psalm* lxvi. v. 3. lxxxi. 15:) but nothing, except his renewing grace, will produce genuine repentance, faith, and love, and conversion from every idol, to his worship, and service. Yet those confessions, which are extorted by torment, or terror, are honourable to God, though useless to the impenitent sinner; (*Mark* c. v. ver. 7;) and he will glorify his name in the punishment of his enemies, as well, as in the salvation of his people. When he contendeth, he will overcome, and all endeavours to evade, or escape his wrath, will only increase man's misery, till the sinner be either brought to true repentance, or sunk under final condemnation; and the contempt, shall equal the torment of his despisers. When the Lord's appointed time shall arrive, all attempts to uphold the falling kingdom of idolatry, infidelity, superstition, or profaneness, will be utterly unavailing; and destruction will overtake those, who are not led to repentance by the discoveries of his power, justice, truth, and love, which will be made in that day of setting up his kingdom throughout the earth. Equally dangerous is it to oppose those partial revivals of true religion, which take place from age to age: for the ark of God will cause every Dagon to fall down before it, until they be broken in pieces; notwithstanding the insolent triumphs of those, who attempt to set them up, and secure them in their place: and the zeal, and pertinacity, with which the grossest idolatries, and most stupid superstitions, have been supported against the cause of God and truth, display the blindness of fallen man's understanding, as much as the depravity of his affections. Thus convinced sinners also with perverse assiduity set up again those false confidences, and worldly idols, which seemed to be thrown down under the preaching of the gospel; or when the old delusion will no longer sooth their conscience, they will exchange it for another, equally absurd, as long as they continue to love sin, and to hate the spiritual service, and humbling truth of God. But when Christ, the true ark of the covenant, really enters the heart of fallen man, (which is indeed satan's temple,) every idol will fall before his presence, and power, every endeavour to set them up again shall be in vain; every iniquity will be forsaken, and unrighteous gain restored; and the Lord will claim, and possess the throne. But pride, self-love, and worldly lusts, though dethroned, and crucified, like the stump of Dagon still remain within us. Let us then watch, and pray against their prevalency, let us seek to have them more entirely destroyed, and let us consider death, as the final destruction of our worst enemy, "the "sin, that dwelleth in us."

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Seven months.*] So long the Philistines endured the judgments of God, before they yielded to restore the ark: so long the Israelites neglected all endeavours to recover it. But it was more honourable to the Lord, to constrain the Philistines to send it back of their own accord, than that war should wrest, or money should ransom it out of their hands.

V. 2—9.] When they could no longer endure the anguish of the emerods, the desolation of the pestilence, or the depredations of the mice, which had now begun to mar their land, (v. 5.) they consulted their priests, and diviners upon the business: and their answer contains such inconsistencies, as aptly develope the workings of the human heart, in such circumstances. From the tradition of Pharaoh's rebellion, and destruction, they exhorted the people very seriously not to harden their hearts, but to let the ark go; but they did not advise them to repent, to renounce idolatry, and to worship Jehovah: nay they were unwilling

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3 And they ſaid, If ye ſend away the ark of the God of Iſrael, ſend it not empty; but in any wiſe return him a treſpaſs-offering: then ye ſhall be healed, and it ſhall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then ſaid they, What *ſhall be* the treſpaſs-offering which we ſhall return to him? They anſwered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philiſtines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye ſhall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye ſhall give glory unto the God of Iſrael: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a treſpaſs-offering, in a coffer by the ſide thereof; and ſend it away, that it may go.

9 And ſee, if it goeth up by the way of his own coaſt to Beth-ſhemeſh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we ſhall know that *it is* not his hand *that* ſmote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

10 And the men did ſo; and took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and ſhut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the ſtraight way to the way of Beth-ſhemeſh, *and* went along the high-way, lowing as they went, and turned not aſide *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philiſtines went after them unto the border of Beth-ſhemeſh.

13 And *they of* Beth-ſhemeſh *were* reaping their wheat-harveſt in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and ſaw the ark, and rejoiced to ſee *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joſhua a Beth-ſhemite, and ſtood there, where *there was* a great ſtone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great ſtone: and the men of Beth-ſhemeſh offered burnt-offerings and ſacrificed ſacrifices, the ſame day unto the LORD.

16 And when the five lords of the Philiſtines had ſeen *it*, they returned to Ekron the ſame day.

17 And theſe *are* the golden emerods, which the Philiſtines returned *for* a treſpaſs-

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to conclude that their afflictions were from him, and framed an artful device for putting it to the trial; and if they were not convinced by another miracle, they determined to keep the ark, and aſcribe all their ſufferings to chance. Some treſpaſs-offerings they ſuppoſed to be neceſſary, if the ark was reſtored, in order that the Lord might "lighten his "hand from off them:" or that they might know wherefore "he did not;" but they were ſuch oblations as were utterly unfit for that purpoſe, though monuments of their perpetual ſhame, and of the Lord's triumph over them. In ſhort they evinced how unwilling they were to yield, and how unable to reſiſt, and the whole tended to magnify this ſymbol of the Lord's preſence. As the Egyptians hired Iſrael with jewels of gold to depart from them, yet were unwilling to let them go quite away; ſo did the Philiſtines by the ark, in taking which, they had ſo triumphed.

10—15.] That two kine, which had never been yoked, and whoſe calves were left at home, ſhould draw quietly, and keep the road without a driver, for ſeveral miles, neither ſtopping, turning aſide, or attempting to return: and that, whilſt they ſhewed the force of inſtinct in lowing for their calves, they ſhould be urged forward with a ſtronger impulſe to the very place, which the Philiſtines had mentioned, was certainly miraculous: and the obedience of the animals, in carrying back the ark, reproached the negligence of Iſrael. The preſumption of the Philiſtines in requiring this additional proof of Jehovah's power, was very great; but it was overruled for the manifeſtation of his glory, and to their deeper condemnation in perſiſting in their idolatry. The triumph of the ark was completed, when it was thus miraculouſly reſtored, with oblations, and the diſtant attendance of the Lords of the Philiſtines. Beth-ſhemeſh was a city of prieſts, in the border of the land; and they very properly offered the kine in ſacrifice before the ark; for nothing, which had been uſed in this ſacred ſervice, could lawfully have been employed to any common uſe: their

offering unto the LORD; for Aſhdod one, for Gaza one, for Aſkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one:

18 And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philiſtines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *ſtone of* Abel, whereon they ſet down the ark of the LORD; *which ſtone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joſhua the Beth-ſhemite.

19 And he ſmote the men of Beth-ſhemeſh, becauſe they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he ſmote of the people fifty thouſand and threeſcore and ten men. And the people lamented, becauſe the LORD had ſmitten *many* of the people with a great ſlaughter.

20 And the men of Beth-ſhemeſh ſaid, Who is able to ſtand before this holy LORD God? and to whom ſhall he go up from us?

21 And they ſent meſſengers to the inhabitants of Kirjah-jearim, ſaying, The Philiſtines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

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other ſacrifices alſo were proper expreſſions of joy and gratitude; but their placing the ark upon this great ſtone, in the open air, without either taking it into their houſes, or preparing a tent for it, ſeems to have been improper. The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim gave it a different reception, and were accepted in ſo doing; probably they intended to forward it without long delay to Shiloh, but this was not the Lord's intention.

V. 19—21.] The Bethſhemites availed themſelves of this opportunity of gratifying their curioſity, by preſumptuouſly looking into the ark, the outſide of which was not to be ſeen uncovered by the Levites, who carried it. (*Num.* c. v. ver. 6.) Perhaps they pretended to examine whether the Philiſtines had taken away the tables of the law; perhaps ſome preſumed upon their prieſtly office, which aggravated their offence; and others upon they having firſt received the ark, and offered ſacrifices before it. But the Lord was provoked by their irreverent intruſion to puniſh many of them with ſudden death. The number, as it ſtands in our verſion, is ſo large to be found in one ſmall city, and the expreſſion in the original is ſo uncommon, that many have conjectured that there is ſome miſapprehenſion reſpecting it: and Joſephus mentions only ſeventy, who were ſlain. However we are not much intereſted in the deciſion of the queſtion. It does not appear that the Bethſhemites were humbled for their offence; but they were ſo terrified, that like the Philiſtines, they wanted to have the ark removed from them, and ſolicited the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When men under divine rebukes, harden themſelves in ſin, they are ſure to prolong and multiply their own miſeries: and it is ſo much more pleaſant to learn wiſdom in ſuch things, by the experience of others, than by our own, that it would be deemed madneſs to do otherwiſe, were it not ſo general! Thoſe convictions which ſpring from terror, without humiliation, will never produce more than an unwilling obedience: and the indignant heart of proud rebels will catch at every pretence, to aſcribe afflictions to chance, and not to the hand of God, and to infer, that it is not abſolutely neceſſary to part with every ſin. If correction be withdrawn, whilſt the heart is thus diſpoſed, the reſpite will prove an encouragement to proceed in tranſgreſſion: if the affliction be continued after a partial amendment, it will be deemed an argument, that repentance, and reformation are uſeleſs; and every diſpenſation of providence will eventually tend to increaſing guilt, and condemnation. Natural reaſon, and conſcience, with ſome fragments of traditional revelation, may convince men, that ſome method ſhould be uſed to appeaſe the anger of God; and enable them to give plauſible advice upon that ſubject: and when men are ſmarting under afflictions, and under the terrors of an awakened conſcience, they will bid high, and do much to purchaſe peace with the Lord: but faith alone, appropriating the information of the word of God, can diſcover what oblation he will accept, or in what way he will be approached by his ſinful creatures. But the inconſiſtencies, and ſuperſtitions of idolaters, and the lukewarmneſs of his profeſſing people, ſhall in due ſeaſon combine to diſplay his glory, to greater advantage. The very brute creation, when he pleaſes, ſhall ſhame man's ingratitude and diſobedience; his enemies ſhall furniſh memorials of their own diſgrace, and all ſhall be conſtrained to ſay, "this hath God "wrought." Many will appear joyful at the revival of religion, and favourable to it's truths, and ordinances, who are too buſy about the world, to put themſelves to much trouble, or expence about them: and many will unite in external obſervances, who have no inward reverence for the divine majeſty. The true glory of religion conſiſts in it's ſpiritual excellency; and that ſimplicity, which the carnal mind, deſpiſes, forms it's higheſt ornament. But preſumptuous intruſion into the ſecret things, which belong to God, forms a heinous provocation, and ſprings from a careleſs, and impenitent heart: and the nearer to the Lord ſuch intruder is, in profeſſion, and in office, the greater his guilt, and the more terrible will be his puniſhment: for though we are not under ſuch a diſpenſation of darkneſs, and diſtance, as Iſrael was; yet our God is ſtill a conſuming fire, and muſt be worſhipped with reverence, and godly fear. Inſtead of this reverence the carnal heart will ſubſtitute a ſlaviſh fear, and when rebuked for preſumption, and contempt, or alarmed with diſcoveries of the juſtice, and holineſs of God, will with the Gadarenes, or theſe Bethſhemites, requeſt the Saviour to depart out of their coaſts, and vainly ſeek to eſcape the Lord's diſpleaſure, by an entire neglect, and forgetfulneſs of him. Thus many ſtifle their convictions, and put away ſalvation from them; and by running into one extreme, or another, the very truths, and ordinances of God, which are means of life, and ſalvation to ſome, become the occaſion of deeper condemnation to others. May the Lord give us a ſpirit of humble fear,

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. The removal of the ark to Kirjath-jearim, v. 1, 2. 2d. Samuel instrumental to an extensive revival of religion, v. 3—6. 3d. Israel attacked by, and victorious over the Philistines, v. 7—11. 4th. Samuel recording the memory of the Lord's goodness, and Israel prosperous under his government, as their judge, v. 13—17.

AND the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and

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filial love, and heavenly hope, that we may be preserved from such fatal mistakes, and profit by the salvation of the gospel, and the ordinances of his worship, with which we are favoured in his providence!

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—2.] Kirjath-jearim lay in the road betwixt Beth-shemesh, and Shiloh, but was not a city of priests. The inhabitants of it, being convinced that the ark was indeed the pledge of their prosperity, and only dangerous, when treated with irreverence, were ready to entertain it, until it's intended removal to Shiloh. It doth not appear, that either Abinadab, or Eleazar his son, were priests, or Levites; and there seems to have been an intentional neglect shewn to that tribe for their wickedness; so that no notice was taken of them in a business, which properly belonged to them wholly: we are not so much as informed whether any of them were employed to fetch the ark to Kirjath-jearim, or whether the Lord dispensed with the irregularity of the inhabitants of that city in carrying it themselves. Here the ark remained, until David removed it in the beginning of his reign, which was more than sixty years after this time. The apostle says, (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 21,) "That God gave them Saul by the space "of forty years:" but it is supposed that this term includes Samuel's government also, from the time of the events recorded in this chapter, which was twenty years after the ark was removed to Kirjath-jearim. (*Note, Judg.* c. xiv. ver. 1.) During this space the Israelites continued in subjection to the Philistines, and in general careless about the ark, or the worship of the Lord: but we must suppose that the prophet Samuel was labouring incessantly, and successfully, from town to town, throughout the whole land, to bring them to repentance, and to revive true religion amongst them.

V. 3—4. *Samuel spake*, &c.] When he had brought numbers of the people to a sense of their sin, and of their duty, he urged the heads of their several tribes to concur in a public, and avowed reformation, and re-establishment of the worship of Jehovah. Few words are indeed used, but they are so expressive, that we cannot hesitate in pronouncing this to have been one of the most general, and effectual revivals of religion, which ever took place in the church of Israel.

V. 5, 6.] (*Note, Judg.* c. xx. v. 1.) This ceremony of drawing water, and pouring it out before the Lord, might be an emblem of the effects of divine grace upon the heart, which disposes it to pour forth itself as water, before the Lord, in penitential confessions, with tears of godly sorrow, and in fervent prayers, and thanksgivings. On this occasion, Samuel seems to have been first publicly acknowledged as judge of Israel.

V. 7. *And when*, &c.] The Philistines considered this general convention of Israel, as the signal for shaking off their yoke, and determined immediately to attack them, before they were prepared for resistance: but their repentance of sin, and earnestness in seeking and serving the Lord formed the best preparation for war: and the event shewed their enemies the difference, betwixt attacking them, whilst thus disposed, and employed, and when buoyed up with presumption, though impenitent, and under condemnation.

V. 9. *Samuel took*, &c.] Samuel was not a priest, but he acted by an extraordinary authority in this, and many other instances, as a prophet of the Lord, and under his

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offered *it for* a burnt-offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Iſrael; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philiſtines drew near to battle againſt Iſrael: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philiſtines, and diſcomfited them; and they were ſmitten before Iſrael.

11 And the men of Iſrael went out of Mizpeh, and purſued the Philiſtines, and ſmote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a ſtone, and ſet *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, ſaying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So the Philiſtines were ſubdued, and they came no more into the coaſt of Iſrael, and the hand of the LORD was againſt the Philiſtines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philiſtines had taken from Iſrael were reſtored to Iſrael, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coaſts thereof did Iſrael deliver out of the hands of the Philiſtines. And there was peace between Iſrael and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Iſrael all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Iſrael in all thoſe places.

17 And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his houſe: and there he judged Iſrael; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

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immediate direction. This ſingle lamb, offered in humble faith, was immenſely more acceptable, than the moſt coſtly ſacrifices offered in pride aud hypocriſy.

V. 12. *Eben-ezer*, &c.] The tranſgreſſions and chaſtiſements of Iſrael had been many; they had repeatedly humbled themſelves before God, and obtained deliverance; and they had again relapſed into ſin, and fallen into diſtreſs: but they had not been given up to total apoſtacy, or utter ruin; and had now once more been brought to repentance, and made partakers of a ſingular deliverance, by the immediate interpoſition of the Almighty. This Samuel, and the people acknowledged with gratitude; and ſet up this ſtone to be a monument of the Lord's goodneſs, for his glory, and the encouragement of themſelves, and their deſcendants to future ages. The word Eben-ezer, ſignifies "the ſtone of help." The church of God, and every believer have continually occaſion to ſet up Eben-ezers, on the ſame account, and for the ſame purpoſes.

V. 14.] After this ſucceſs the Philiſtines were conſtrained to reſtore ſuch cities of Iſrael, as they had ſeized, even thoſe, which were ſituated in the neighbourhood of Ekron and Gath: and though we do not ſuppoſe that the Iſraelites entered into treaty with the Amorites, who dwelt amongſt them, they were ſo kept under, as to create them no diſturbance.

V. 15. *All the days of his life.*] That is, from this time, which probably was near thirty-eight years, and within about two years of the death of Saul: for Samuel ſeems to have retained conſiderable influence during the reign of that king, eſpecially in the neighbourhood of Ramah.

V. 17. *And there he built an altar*, &c.] It is very remarkable, that in this great revival of true religion the ark was neither removed to Shiloh, nor placed with the tabernacle in any other ſituation. It is uncertain whether the ſanctuary ſervice was carried on at Shiloh, or not, during this period: but probably it was either neglected, or very improperly conducted; and as to the ark, it's glory, was departed, the more pious Iſraelites diſregarded it; and preferred joining with Samuel in the ſacrifices, and worſhip, which doubtleſs by divine direction, he performed near his own houſe. This diſregard to the Levitical inſtitutions, ſurely intimated that their typical meaning formed their chief uſe; and that, when that was overlooked, they became a lifeleſs carcaſe, by no means to be compared with repentance, faith, and the love of God, and man.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the ſtated miniſters of God's word neglect their duty, and ſcandalize their profeſſion, the Lord will render them contemptible in the eyes of the people, (*Mal.* c. ii. v. 8, 9;) and employ others to reform the ſtate of religion, and uphold his worſhip: for every external inſtitution had better be diſpenſed with, than irreligion be permitted to diffuſe it's baneful influence. The truths and ordinances of God are dangerous only to thoſe, who deſpiſe, and abuſe them, and are always comfortable, and profitable to the humble believer: the threatenings therefore of God's word, and the judgments, that he hath executed upon ſuch, as have profaned them, ſhould not induce us to reject, or neglect them; but to be more circumſpect, and jealous of ourſelves, in our profeſſed regard to, and attendance on them. When the cauſe of God is deſerted in one place, it will be ſupported in another; and, though the public, and regular adminiſtration of divine ordinances be very deſirable, yet the ſame bleſſing may redound to individuals, when in God's providence, they are driven into corners, and confined to private houſes. The word of God may be faithfully preached, and other proper means of promoting true religion be uſed for a long time, without producing viſible, or extenſive effects: but they, who are employed in ſuch a work, ſhould ſow the ſeed in faith, and hope, and water it with prayers, and tears; they ſhould be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; perſevere without wearineſs, or yielding to deſpondency, and wait the Lord's time: and their labour will not be in vain; nay perhaps the ſeed, which hath been long ſown, and conſidered as loſt, will at length ſpring up with ſo large an increaſe, as to exceed their own moſt ſanguine expectations. It is a pleaſing proſpect to the faithful labourer, when he perceives the hearers convinced of their ſins, and mourning for the tokens of the Lord's diſpleaſure: and this will alſo afford him the long-wiſhed opportunity, of preſſing matters ſtill more cloſely, and particularly upon their conſciences; that

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Samuel grown old, making his ſons judges, their miſconduct, the people's complaint, and deſire of a king, v. 1—5. 2d. Samuel diſpleaſed, and praying; the Lord directing him to ſhew the people the effects of kingly government; and, as they perſiſted in their requeſt, to comply with it; and his diſmiſſing the people, v. 6—22.

AND it came to paſs, when Samuel was old, that he made his ſons judges over Iſrael.

2 Now the name of his firſt-born was Joel, and the name of his ſecond Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-ſheba.

3 And his ſons walked not in his ways, but turned aſide after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Iſrael gathered themſelves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy ſons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

ſuch good impreſſions may not wear off through procraſtination, or produce only a partial, or external reformation: but that the people may be prevailed upon to "return to the "Lord with all their hearts, and to ſerve him only," expecting all their ſalvation, and comfort from him, and renouncing every falſe dependance, and worldly luſt. Though this bleſſed frame of mind be the effect of divine grace, yet it is our duty; and in the uſe of means, we are required to prepare our hearts, and arm our ſouls with a ſtedfaſt determination thus to truſt in, and to ſerve the Lord: (*Acts*, c. xi. v. 23. 1 *Pet.* c. iv. ver. 1.) When in the firſt place every one hath "taken heed unto himſelf," he ought next to employ his beſt endeavours to engage his family, and his neighbour to the ſervice of God alſo: and when thoſe in the high ſtations, and public employments in ſociety unite in uſing their influence for theſe purpoſes, the moſt extenſive bleſſings may be expected. The effectual fervent prayer alſo of a righteous man availeth much: and the more men know of God, and of themſelves, the more will they deſire, and value the prayers of every Chriſtian, and of thoſe eſpecially, who are moſt eminent for faith, and holineſs; at all times, but particularly in ſeaſons of temporal, or ſpiritual diſtreſs. Bleſſed be God that Jeſus ever liveth to intercede for us, and at all ſeaſons pleadeth his own atoning blood in the behalf of all, who come to God through him! And through his ſacrifice, and mediation all our prayers for ourſelves, and others, are accepted of the Father. But neither his merits, nor the prayers of his ſervants for us, ſuperſede the neceſſity of our perſonal repentance, confeſſions of ſin, cries for mercy, and holy obedience: and ſeaſons of deep humiliation for ſin, and prayer for ſpecial bleſſings, are very properly attended with faſting, and other indications of ſelf-diſplacency, and diſregard to animal indulgence; that we may pour out our whole ſouls before the Lord, without having our attention diſtracted by any outward concern. When we are thus employed in earneſt devotion, ſatan, and his agents, may be eſpecially excited to aſſault us, as hating ſuch holy engagements, and envying our felicity: but they cannot do us any harm, except they can fright us from our duty. Nor can any hoſtile preparations prevail againſt that nation, which, in a ſpirit of true repentance, and reformation, and the fervent prayer of faith, hath entruſted itſelf unto the Lord's protection. Through ſucceſſive generations the church of God hath had occaſion to ſet up Eben-ezers for renewed deliverances: for neither outward perſecutions, nor internal corruptions have yet prevailed againſt her; becauſe "hitherto the Lord hath helped her;" and he will help her, even unto the end of the world. Every believer ſhould review the records of this preſervation, and theſe deliverances with admiring gratitude, and joyful hope; and then looking back into his own experience, he will find an abridgment of the ſame hiſtory: notwithſtanding temptation, and outward oppoſition. Notwithſtanding the deceitfulneſs of his own heart, and the power of his inbred luſts; through ſeaſons of ſlackneſs, and revival; through many tranſgreſſions, corrections, deliverances, and relapſes; through many fears, conflicts, and difficulties, he hath ſtill been preſerved from apoſtacy, and perhaps from diſgracing his profeſſion; "for hitherto hath the Lord helped him." If this be our happy caſe, let us raiſe up our Eben-ezers, in rendering the Lord our unreſerved praiſe: let us renew our application to God our Saviour for increaſing ſtrength in our ſoul, and power againſt our enemies: let us ſpeak to the encouragement of others of his love, and truth, that they may be animated to truſt and rejoice in the Lord: let us puſh ſtill farther every advantage againſt our enemies, aſpiring after entire liberty, and complete deliverance: let us ſubmit to thoſe, who have approved themſelves faithful, and have been made uſeful to us, in watching for our ſouls: let us keep cloſe to the means of grace, and the worſhip of God, and diligently improve our talents, and lay ourſelves out for the good of all around us. At ſtated ſeaſons, as at the concluſion of the year, or when about to approach the Lord's table, &c, or when we have received ſome remarkable mercy, we ſhall find it peculiarly uſeful thus to review our ways, and to wait upon the Lord to renew our ſtrength: in ſo doing we may hope ere long to ſet up our laſt Eben-ezer in the realms above, and to begin our eternal ſongs of joyful praiſe, to him, who hath helped us quite through, and made us more than conquerors.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—5. *He made his ſons*, &c.] We do not find that either God, or the people cenſured Samuel in this affair: we may thence infer, that he had properly educated his ſons, and that they appeared properly qualified for this office, and were appointed to it, for the good, and by the approbation of the people; though they deceived theſe expectations, and through love of money, became unjuſt judges. This was Samuel's affliction, rather than Iſrael's grievance; for had they conferred with him, he would doubtleſs have agreed to their deprivation, and cenſure, and to the appointment of more proper perſons in their places:

6 But

6 But the thing diſpleaſed Samuel, when they ſaid, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they ſay unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done, ſince the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forſaken me, and ſerved other gods; ſo do they alſo unto thee.

9 Now therefore, hearken unto their voice: howbeit, yet proteſt ſolemnly unto them, and ſhew them the manner of the king that ſhall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that aſked of him a king.

11 And he ſaid, This will be the manner of the king that ſhall reign over you; He will take your ſons, and appoint *them* for himſelf, for his chariots, and *to be* his horſemen; and *ſome* ſhall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thouſands, and captains over fifties, and *will ſet them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harveſt, and to make his inſtruments of war, and inſtruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, *even* the beſt *of them*, and give *them* to his ſervants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your ſeed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his ſervants.

16 And he will take your men-ſervants, and your maid-ſervants, and your goodlieſt young men, and your aſſes, and put *them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your ſheep: and ye ſhall be his ſervants.

18 And ye ſhall cry out in that day, becauſe of your king which ye ſhall have choſen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheleſs, the people refuſed to obey the voice of Samuel: and they ſaid, Nay, but we will have a king over us,

20 That we alſo may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearſed them in the ears of the LORD.

22 And the LORD ſaid to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.

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but they were more diſpleaſed at this ſmall injury to their temporal intereſts, than they had been by all the diſhonour done to God by the impious debaucheries of Eli's ſons. They were weary of being ruled by pious judges, and prophets, raiſed up of God to reform religion; and wanted to look great in the eyes of the ſurrounding nations, by the external grandeur of kingly government: and this circumſtance ſerved them for an occaſion of propoſing the matter to Samuel.

V. 6—18.] Iſrael never had had ſo much reaſon to be ſatisfied with the government of judges, as under Samuel, who had been the inſtrument of exceeding great advantages to them: he was therefore much diſpleaſed to ſee them thus evidently actuated by an impatient diſcontented ſpirit; and felt with great ſenſibility, their ingratitude to himſelf. But he did not vent his diſpleaſure in reproaches, but in prayer, not knowing what anſwer to return to their demand, till he was inſtructed by the Lord; for if he had endeavoured to diſſuade them from their purpoſe, they would have aſcribed it to his ambition. Accordingly the Lord reminded him, that in rejecting him their judge, they actually rejected the Lord, who as king appointed their judges, according to all their former rebellions; and that therefore they were to be allowed their choice, for their correction. However he was directed to inform them, not *how a king ought to rule*, but *of the manner, in which they generally do rule*; by what heavy taxes, and oppreſſive meaſures, they ſupport their luxury, and magnificence; and by what methods they perform their oſtentatious works, and keep up their military force; perverting authority into tyranny, and changing ſubjection into ſlavery. As theſe are the natural effects of too great power entruſted with a fallen creature, we ought conſequently to prefer thoſe limitations, and reſtrictions, which are equally beneficial to the governors, and the governed. He was alſo directed to warn them, that if they obſtinately perſiſted in their requeſt, they would certainly be ſorry for it, and would cry unto the Lord to redreſs their grievances, but that he would not hear them.

V. 19—22.] After ſuch a proteſtation from their aged prophet in the name of the Lord, the people were ſo madly ſet upon their own meaſures, that they would have a king; accordingly they were diſmiſſed with the aſſurance of being gratified. Amidſt all this evil, we muſt note to their commendation, that they ſhewed great reſpect to Samuel: they

And Samuel ſaid unto the men of Iſrael, Go ye every man unto his city.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The perſon, and parentage of Saul, v,1, 2. 2d. His ſeeking his father's aſſes, and coming to Samuel, v. 3—14. 3d. His reception, and entertainment by him, v. 15—27.

NOW there was a man of Benjamin, whoſe name *was* Kiſh, the ſon of Abiel, the ſon of Zeror, the ſon of Bechorath, the ſon of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

2 And he had a ſon whoſe name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly; and *there was* not among the children of Iſrael a good-

did not ſet up a king for themſelves of their own chooſing, but ſought his counſel, and concurrence; and they put ſuch confidence in his word, that upon an intimation from him, that a king ſhould be given them, they were willing to wait, and departed quietly to their own houſes. The hiſtory of the world cannot produce another inſtance, in which a public determination was formed to appoint a king; and yet no one perſon either propoſed himſelf, or ſome other to be king, but referred the determination entirely to the providence of God! Ambition of authority was certainly not the motive in the leading men, who ſupported this meaſure.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our lives are ſo ſhort, and our faculties are ſo ſoon impaired, that we ought to be active in the ſervice of God, whilſt we poſſeſs health of body, and vigour of mind: then under diſqualifying infirmities, it will be our comfort to reflect, that our youth, and ſtrength were ſpent to ſome uſeful purpoſes. No inſtructions, or examples of men can overcome the bias of nature to evil: and the Lord communicates his ſanctifying grace by wiſe, and righteous rules, of which he doth not deign to inform us: duty is our part, and conſequences muſt be left with him. External reſtraints may produce appearances, which impoſe upon the moſt diſcerning Judges; yet when they are withdrawn, and temptations are met with, the evil heart will diſcover itſelf: and proſperity has a natural tendency to increaſe evil propenſities. Parents ſhould therefore prepare to bear with reſignation diſappointments reſpecting their children; and they ſhould not be anxious to prefer, or enrich them, leſt they ſhould aſſiſt in inflaming their luſts. The love of money is the root of all evil, and is peculiarly odious, and miſchievous in magiſtrates, and miniſters. They, who have been moſt active, diſintereſted, and uſeful, muſt expect to meet with ingratitude, and neglect, as man's recompence for their ſervices; but every loſs, and injury will prove a real gain to thoſe who expect their gracious recompence from God alone. And ſurely we may chearfully ſubmit to be rejected, deſpiſed, and hated by thoſe, who reject, deſpiſe, and hate the Lord; nay we ſhould conſider it as an honourable teſtimony, that we are acknowledged to ſtand on his part. Grace will change, and convictions will reſtrain human depravity; but in itſelf it is the ſame from generation to generation; and is now prone to the ſame rebellions, which heretofore provoked the Lord to anger. Diſcontent, and fondneſs of change, and a deſire of conformity to the world, and of outward ſplendour, are natural to man, and follow him from the cradle to the grave, unleſs ſubdued by divine grace: no change of circumſtance can cure theſe diſeaſes; the diſſatisfaction of the preſent ſituation is impatiently felt, the comfort of ſome other is eagerly, and ignorantly conceived; and neither the counſels of wiſe men, nor the teſtimony of God will ſuppreſs the cravings of inordinate deſires. When the mind is thus diſpoſed, the ſlighteſt circumſtance will ſerve as a pretext for ruſhing upon gratification; yet a godly man would grieve to give others by his conduct ſuch an occaſion of ſin. Nay the Lord requires his ſervants rather to yield to the unjuſt, and unreaſonable deſires of men, than to ſeem attached to earthly objects. And he frequently gives them their wiſhes in anger, (*Hoſea* c. xiii. v. 10, 11.) to chaſtiſe their iniquity, and convince them of their folly. When our grief, or diſpleaſure ſends us to prayer, nothing can injure, or even long diſtreſs us; for the conſolations of God will richly repay the injuries of men. Under the troubles, which the providence of God hath allotted us, we may expect the ſupports of his grace: but if we abſolutely perſiſt in chooſing for ourſelves; when we have exchanged ſlight inconveniences for real grievances, we ſhall have the aggravation of an accuſing conſcience, and the divine rebuke: and this will often be the caſe; for thoſe things which at a diſtance look pleaſant, are generally moſt bitter, when in actual poſſeſſion. The *law of God*, and *the manner* of men are widely different from each other; the former ſhould be our rule in the ſeveral relations of life; the latter the meaſure of our expectations from others. As magiſtracy is God's appointment, and a great bleſſing; and as every form is liable to abuſes; our wiſdom is to be thankful for the advantages, and patient under the inconveniences of that government, which we live under; and to pray continually for our rulers, that they may govern us in the fear of God, and that we may live under them in all godlineſs, and honeſty; thus honouring God, and the king, and not meddling with them, that are given to change, or diſpoſed, upon every imaginary grievance, to ſpeak evil of the ruler of the people: for many deſired alterations are only from bad to worſe. But the Lord's people ſhould behave ſo unexceptionably, that even thoſe that injure them may not be able to impeach their integrity, or to withhold from them reſpect, and confidence. And it is an hopeful ſymptom, when our deſires of worldly objects can brook delay; and when we can refer the time, and manner of their being granted to the determination of God's providence.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1, 2. *Now there*, &c.] It is wonderful, that ſome chief of the tribe of Judah did not now claim the kingdom, in virtue of Jacob's bleſſing; but it was of the Lord, that he might firſt give them *ſuch a king*, as they had ſet their hearts upon, for their correction, before he raiſed up for them a king after his own heart. The tribe of Benjamin, by the fatal cataſtrophe of Gibeah's wickedneſs, was reduced to be the leaſt in Iſrael; but the indivi-

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lier perſon than he: from his ſhoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

3 And the aſſes of Kiſh, Saul's father, were loſt; and Kiſh ſaid to Saul his ſon, Take now one of the ſervants with thee, and ariſe, go ſeek the aſſes.

4 And he paſſed through mount Ephraim, and paſſed through the land of Shaliſha, but they found *them* not: then they paſſed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not; and he paſſed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul ſaid to his ſervant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; leſt my father leave *caring* for the aſſes, and take thought for us.

6 And he ſaid unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he ſaith cometh ſurely to paſs: now, let us go thither: peradventure he can ſhew us our way that we ſhould go.

7 Then ſaid Saul to his ſervant, But behold, *if* we go, what ſhall we bring the man? for the bread is ſpent in our veſſels, and *there is* not a preſent to bring to the man of God: what have we?

8 And the ſervant anſwered Saul again, and ſaid, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a ſhekel of ſilver; *that* will I give to the man of God to tell us our way.

9 (Before-time in Iſrael, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he ſpake, Come, and let us go to the ſeer: for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet, was before-time called a Seer.)

10 Then ſaid Saul to his ſervant, Well ſaid; come, let us go: ſo they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

11 *And* as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and ſaid unto them, Is the ſeer here?

12 And they anſwered them, and ſaid, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haſte now, for he came to-day to the city; for *there is* a ſacrifice of the people to-day in the high place.

13 As ſoon as ye be come into the city ye ſhall ſtraightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, becauſe he doth bleſs the ſacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore, get you up; for about this time ye ſhall find him.

14 And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out againſt them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, ſaying,

16 To-morrow about this time I will ſend thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou ſhalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Iſrael, that he may ſave my people

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duals were enriched in proportion. Even if Kiſh were of an inferior family in this tribe, (v. 21,) he might be a very wealthy perſon; and his ſon was poſſeſſed of all external accompliſhments, ſuited to that carnal principle, which had dictated Iſrael's requeſt. Though Saul had ſons grown up, he was ſtill in the full vigour of manhood, which is all that is implied in the expreſſion, that is tranſlated "a choice "young man."

V. 5. *Zuph*, &c.] (ch. i. v. 1.) The land, where Ramah ſtood.

V. 6—10.] It is obſervable that the ſervant knew more of Samuel, than Saul did, and ſpake very reſpectfully of him: yet they both looked upon him rather as a diviner, than as a prophet of God, whoſe office it was to inſtruct them in his truth and will: and though it might be cuſtomary to ſhew their reſpect in thoſe days to prophets, and even to princes, by a preſent; yet when they concluded, that Samuel would not be approached without ſome gift, they judged of him by themſelves, or rather by the mercenary pretenders to divination. The ninth verſe was evidently inſerted, as a comment, in after ages, perhaps by Ezra, who is ſuppoſed to have collected, and ſet forth a correct edition of the Scriptures then extant, under the ſuperintendency of the Spirit of prophecy. In the days of Samuel, prophets were emphatically ſtiled "Seers," or perſons, who ſee further into divine things than other men do.

V. 12—14.] (*Note* c. vii. v. 17.) Samuel having burned upon the altar the appointed portion of the peace-offerings, previous to the ſacred feaſt upon the remainder, poured out fervent prayers to the Lord for his acceptance, and for his bleſſing on the ſervice, as a religious ordinance, to the good of their ſouls; as well as on their food for the refreſhment of their bodies. And doubtleſs this was the general obſervance in all the ſacrifices at the tabernacle, and temple, at thoſe times when true religion flouriſhed; though at other times it would degenerate into a form.

V. 16. *Out of the hand*, &c.] When Iſrael grew ſlack in ſerving God, the Philiſtines recovered their authority: and though Saul did not reform their religion, yet in many inſtances he ſucceſsfully fought their battles.

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out of the hand of the Philiſtines: for I have looked upon my people, becauſe their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel ſaw Saul, the LORD ſaid unto him, Behold the man whom I ſpake to thee of: this ſame ſhall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and ſaid, Tell me, I pray thee, where the ſeer's houſe *is*.

19 And Samuel anſwered Saul, and ſaid, I *am* the ſeer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye ſhall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

20 And as for thine aſſes that were loſt three days ago, ſet not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the deſire of Iſrael? *is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's houſe?

21 And Saul anſwered and ſaid, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the ſmalleſt of the tribes of Iſrael? and my family the leaſt of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then ſpeakeſt thou ſo to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his ſervant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them ſit in the chiefeſt place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty perſons.

23 And Samuel ſaid unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I ſaid unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up the ſhoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and ſet *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* ſaid, Behold that which is left, ſet *it* before thee, *and* eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, ſince I ſaid, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the houſe.

26 And they aroſe early: and it came to paſs about the ſpring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the houſe, ſaying, Up, that I may ſend thee away. And Saul aroſe, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel ſaid to Saul, Bid the ſervant paſs on before us, (and he paſſed on,) but ſtand thou ſtill a while, that I may ſhew thee the word of God.

V. 24. *Behold that, which is left*, &c.] Or "reſerved;" being ſet apart, the beſt portion for Saul, as the chief gueſt, whom Samuel had expected before he came. All theſe circumſtances were calculated to prepare Saul's mind for what followed, and to ſhew him the interpoſition of God therein.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are never more like to be unhappy, than when we have our outward portion, or connexions, according to the choice, and wiſh of our own hearts: we ought therefore to beg of God in every thing to chooſe for us, and to teach us to acquieſce in his appointment. True excellency of character doth not reſult from external accompliſhments; nor true felicity from proſperous circumſtances, and outward ſplendour: inattention to theſe obvious truths occaſions the moſt fatal miſtakes of mankind. Diligence in buſineſs, and good behaviour in relative life, are commendable, but no ſure tokens of true piety, or acceptance with God. We ſenſibly feel our temporal loſſes, and beſtow much pains to retrieve them: but how little do we attempt, and how ſpeedily are we weary, in ſeeking the ſalvation of our ſouls! Nay, if miniſters could inform men how to ſecure their property, or to acquire wealth, they would be more reſpected, and conſulted, than they now are, when they are employed in teaching them how to eſcape eternal miſery, and to obtain eternal life! Indeed we all are naturally more deſirous to learn our fortune, than our duty; and curioſity, or worldly motives are generally the *firſt* means of bringing men acquainted with the miniſters, and the word of God: and were they not providentially brought to them, they would ſeldom go out of their way to enquire after them: this is the reaſon that poor ſervants, and mechanics are ſo often better acquainted with, and have more reſpect for the men of God, than the rich and great; as they have not ſo many things to take off their thoughts from, or prejudice their hearts againſt them, and their meſſage. But many will ſpeak of miniſters, as men of God, and honourable men, whoſe words will certainly come to paſs, who neither comply with their exhortations, nor imitate their examples: and whilſt they are conſcious, that they do not chooſe to be at any expence in religion; they ſuſpect, that the miniſters teach for hire, and will do no more, than they are paid for. And indeed there always have been ſo many of this temper, that inattentive obſervers will not readily underſtand the difference betwixt ſuch *mercenary diviners*, and the true ſervants of the Lord, who ſeek not their's but them; nor between the blind watchmen, and guides, and thoſe, who are *ſeers* indeed, whoſe eyes the Lord hath opened, and thus qualified to ſhew others the way of ſalvation. But the ſeeing eye, and the hearing ear are, in this ſenſe alſo, from the Lord, and to thoſe, that wait on him, he will communi-

BRITISH
29 AP 92
MUSEUM

Engravd for the Revd. Mr. Nolls Family Bible.

I. SAMUEL. CH. X. VE. I.

C. R. Ryley del. *Grignion sculp.*

Publish'd as the Act directs, by Bellamy & Roberts, Sept.r 12.th 1790

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Samuel anointing Saul, and dismissing him with directions; and tokens, which accordingly came to pass, v. 1—13. 2d. Saul's answer to the inquiries of his uncle, v. 14—16. 3d. Samuel convening the people; who single out Saul, as their appointed king; and his, and their behaviour on the occasion, v. 17—27.

THEN Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?

2 When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachael's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saynig, What shall I do for my son?

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread, which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

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cate those truths, which he would have them communicate to the people. True grace will teach us to honour those, whom God hath honoured, though their advancement be attended by our degredation; but it is always right to regulate that respect in such a manner, as to endeavour to bring them acquainted with the truths, and worship of God. Without fervent prayer and praise, springing from a penitent believing heart, a solemn sacrifice would have degenerated into a profane meal; and with them an ordinary meal becomes a spriritual sacrifice: but they, who eat their food without thanking the Lord for it, or craving his blessing on it, are scarce distinguishable from brutes, or from Atheists: and the examples of eminent persons, even in such matters as these, may have a salutary effect on those around them. Before honour is humility, and they, who have well learned to obey, are most likely to be advanced to command, and to do it properly. But how different are the Lord's purposes respecting us, to our intentions for ourselves! perhaps Saul was the only man, who set out to seek asses, and literally found a kingdom: but many have set out, and moved their habitations, &c, to seek riches and pleasures, who have been guided to such places, where they have found the salvation of their souls: having met with those, who have addressed them, as if informed of the secrets of their lives, and hearts; and having been thereby led seriously to regard the message of the Lord delivered by them. If this hath been our case, though our worldly projects have all been frustrated, let us cease caring about it; for the Lord has given, or prepared for us that, which is infinitely better.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1. *Then Samuel took*, &c.] In the conversation of thepreceding evening, and of that morning, Samuel had doubtless given Saul all needful information, preparatory to this ceremony; and probably with exhortations, counsels, and prayers. The priests were anointed to their office, as types of Christ, and as implying their need of the communication of the Holy Spirit, to furnish them for their sacred work; for the same reasons, the kings also were anointed. In performing this sacred rite Samuel assured Saul of the Lord's choice of him to be the king of Israel, and of his own hearty concurrence: the kiss denoted affection, and subjection to him as the Lord's anointed king, (*Psalm* ii. v. 12.) The vial of oil hath been considered as an emblem of the feebleness, frailness, and short continuance of the kingdom in Saul's family: (c. xvi. v. 13.)

V. 2. *When thou art departed*, &c.] We may suppose that Saul was exceedingly surprised, and scarce able to believe what Samuel had said to him: to convince him therefore, that the matter was from the Lord, Samuel prophetically informed him of some incidents, which he would meet with in his return.

V. 3, 4. *To Bethel*, &c.] In the present derangement of the Levitical institutions, high places were connived at, where sacrifices were offered to Jehovah, and where priests attended to receive their oblations, and minister in their office. These persons carrying their offerings to Bethel, were secretly disposed of God to present two loaves to Saul, as the first tribute paid him, after he was anointed king; which hath been thought an emblematic instruction to him, still to be content with plain fare, and not to covet luxuries.

V. 5, 6.] This hill of God, which was kept by a garrison of the Philistines, seems to have been near Gibeah, where Saul lived; and an high-place for the worship of God was situated there, (v. 13.) From the time of Samuel there appear to have been seminaries, where pious young men were educated under the tuition of some approved prophets, in the knowledge of divine things; upon whom God was frequently pleased to bestow the spirit of prophecy: and they were very useful in preserving some sense of true religion in the land, when the priests, and Levites

7 And let it be, when theſe ſigns are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occaſion ſhall ſerve thee; for God *is* with thee.

8 And thou ſhalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, *and* to ſacrifice ſacrifices of peace-offerings: ſeven days ſhalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and ſhew thee what thou ſhalt do.

9 And it was *ſo*, that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all thoſe ſigns came to paſs that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he propheſied among them.

11 And it came to paſs, when all that knew him before-time ſaw that, behold, he propheſied among the prophets, then the people ſaid one to another, What *is* this *that* is come upon the ſon of Kiſh? *Is* Saul alſo among the prophets?

12 And one of the ſame place anſwered, and ſaid, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul alſo among the prophets?

13 And when he had made an end of propheſying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle ſaid unto him and to his ſervant, Whither went ye? And he ſaid, To ſeek the aſſes: and when we ſaw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel.

15 And Saul's uncle ſaid, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel ſaid unto you?

16 And Saul ſaid unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the aſſes were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel ſpake, he told him not.

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

18 And ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I brought up Iſrael out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppreſſed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himſelf ſaved you out of all your adverſities and your tribulations; and ye have ſaid unto him, *Nay*, but ſet a king over us. Now therefore preſent yourſelves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thouſands.

20 And when Samuel had cauſed all the tribes of Iſrael to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had cauſed the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the fa-

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too generally neglected their duty. The garriſon of the Philiſtines did not, it ſeems, diſturb them in their devout ſtudies, and exerciſes. The prophets frequently uſed ſolemn muſic to compoſe their minds for the illapſes of the Spirit of God; (2 *Kings*, c. iii. v. 15.)

V. 8. *And thou ſhalt*, &c.] The deliverance of Iſrael from the oppreſſion of the Philiſtines, though one great end of Saul's appointment to the kingdom, was not attempted, till the ſecond year of his reign, in which probably he ſinfully procraſtinated. At that time Saul, at Gilgal, neglected to wait for Samuel, according to directions given him, which correſpond with theſe, (c. xiii. v. 8.) To that event therefore this paſſage ſeems to refer, and to imply an inſtruction from God, that as ſoon as Saul was confirmed in the kingdom, he ſhould aſſemble the Iſraelites at Gilgal, and there wait till Samuel came to offer ſacrifices for him: his delay might make way for his acting contrary to his inſtructions; and perhaps the latter clauſe was intended as a rule to be obſerved on every occaſion.

V. 9. *Another heart*, &c.] That is, another diſpoſition of mind: he was inſpired with fortitude, and reſolution, and his mind enlarged to great deſigns of governing, and delivering Iſrael, and deſtroying their enemies, &c. Perhaps he was alſo brought under religious impreſſions, which might be termed another, though not a new heart. And indeed his conduct for a ſeaſon appeared very promiſing, though he afterwards proved very vile.

V. 10—13.] When he came among the prophets the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he ſpake ſo pertinently and fluently in divine things; that thoſe, who before had known him, were aſtoniſhed to hear him: and one ſaid, "But who is their father?"—This may be interpreted, is not God the father, or former of prophets? Why need you then be ſurpriſed to ſee Saul, though before an unlikely perſon, become one of them? Or, is not Samuel the father, or inſtitutor of this ſeminary? and Saul has been all night with him, and is thus become one of them. It cauſed greater aſtoniſhment many ages afterwards to ſee another Saul among the apoſtles of Jeſus! Some imagine that Saul went to the High Place to perform his devotions, before he returned home.

V. 16. *He told him not*, &c.] This may be aſcribed to a commendable modeſty, and prudence, by which he would avoid oſtentation, ſhun envy, and patiently wait the event in God's providence.

V. 20. *The tribe*, &c.] The determination was probably

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mily of Matri was taken, and Saul the ſon of Kiſh was taken, and when they ſought him he could not be found.

22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man ſhould yet come thither. And the LORD anſwered, Behold, he hath hid himſelf among the ſtuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he ſtood among the people, he was higher than any of the people, from his ſhoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel ſaid to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath choſen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people ſhouted, and ſaid, God ſave the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel ſent all the people away, every man to his houſe.

26 And Saul alſo went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whoſe hearts God had touched.

27 But the children of Belial ſaid, How ſhall this man ſave us? and they deſpiſed him, and brought him no preſents: but he held his peace.

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by lot; for God's appointment was thus aſcertained, not the people's election. His hiding himſelf ſeems to have ariſen from an improper diffidence, and diſtruſt of God.

V. 25. *The manner of the kingdom*, &c.] That is, the rules of the government; or in modern language, the prerogatives of the prince, and the privileges of the people. We may be ſure this *manner of the kingdom* would differ conſiderably *from the manner of the king* before mentioned: the one being the appointment of God, and the other, the depraved diſpoſition of human nature, when entruſted with authority.

V. 26, 27.] The greateſt part of the people treated the matter with indifference: Saul modeſtly went home to his own houſe, but was attended by a band of men, whoſe hearts God had diſpoſed to ſupport his authority; whilſt others deſpiſed him, and would not acknowledge him king. But he very wiſely held his peace, and reſented not their affront: by which means civil diſcords were prevented.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Many are called to, fitted for, and employed in outward ſervices to the Lord's people, who are not anointed with the unction of ſanctifying grace; yet the moſt eminent Chriſtians, or miniſters muſt honour, and obey God's authority in them. The attentive believer comparing the diſpenſations of Providence with the word of God, will perceive his hand in the moſt ordinary concerns of life, as fulfilments of the Scripture, anſwers of Prayer, and evidences of the Lord's peculiar kindneſs to him. A ſuperior *care* in common life ſwallows up a leſſer; the tender parent ceaſes from his anxiety about his property, when ſolicitous for the welfare of his ſon: children therefore ſhould be careful not to diſtreſs ſuch kind friends: but we are alſo reminded hereby, that a due concern about eternal things would moderate our care about the intereſts of this life. No incumbent evils can mar their comfort, who enjoy communion with God; no enemy can annoy them, when he wills them to be at peace; and he will teach them, to uſe in ſubſerviency to godlineſs thoſe things, wherewith carnal minds inflame their paſſions, and diſſipate all ſerious reflection. Many changes may take place in a man's language, conduct, and diſpoſition, who is not born of God: another man he may become, and not a new creature! another heart he may have, but not an holy heart! he may be qualified for ruling, or preaching, and not be made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light; nay he may propheſy, and work miracles, and yet be a child of the devil! Sudden changes are indeed generally to be ſuſpected: but when we conſider who makes the Chriſtian, and the prophet, we need not be offended, ſhould we number amongſt profeſſors, or preachers of the goſpel, ſome ungodly Saul of our former acquaintance: for true converſion makes ſo great a change in a man's character, &c, that former friends can ſcarce believe him to be the ſame; whether they admire and love, or whether they deſpiſe and hate the change. As far as we depend upon the guidance of the Spirit of God, we may regulate our general conduct, as circumſtances require, and may act with humble confidence in perplexing ſituations, being aſſured that God is with us: but every enterprize ſhould be entered upon, with reference to the authority, and worſhip of God; his directions carefully obſerved, and his time waited for. We may freely ſpeak of thoſe things, which are honourable to others, but had ordinarily beſt be ſilent, as to thoſe tranſactions, which tend to advance our own reputation. The Lord will bring to a ſeaſonable determination thoſe affairs, which are referred to him: but the joy of having inordinate deſires gratified will be ſhort lived. It is good to be conſcious of our unworthineſs, and inſufficiency, for the ſervices, to which we are called; and to avoid oſtentation, and whatever may excite envy, and oppoſition: but men ſhould be careful not to run into the oppoſite extreme, by refuſing the employments, to which the Lord and his church call them, through meanneſs of ſpirit, and unbelief. Indeed high ſtations are heavy burdens, when the duties of them are conſcientiouſly attended upon: and the comfort of them is but ſmall; for the heart of man is prone to envy all, who are preferred. Our natural enmity to God diſpoſes us to deſpiſe, and oppoſe the inſtruments, that he ſelects for the government of ſtates, and for promoting the cauſe of his church: and if ſome approve, rejoice in, honour and help them; others will revile, and contemn them. But we ſhould wait the Lord's will with patience, and without diſcouragement, and bear man's ſcorn and malice in ſilent meekneſs, and attend to the duties of our ſtation, according to the manner of it; thus the fatal effects of diſcord will be prevented, and in due ſeaſon the Lord will plead our cauſe, and all oppoſition will fall before us. Men ſeldom receive that with

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. Jabesh-gilead distressed by the Ammonites, v. 1—3. 2d. Rescued by the resolution, and dispatch of Saul, v. 4—11. 3d. His clemency to his despisers, and confirmation in the kingdom, v. 12—15.

THEN Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make *a covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, *What aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring

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thankfu'ness, which they sought with eagerness; for every particular doth not exactly answer their expectation, and that occasions dissatisfaction and sullen discontent. And if any welcome with unfeigned gratitude God's gracious appointment, and set themselves cordially to promote his cause; (especially the cause of Christ, our anointed king, whom so many children of Belial despise;) they are such, whose hearts he hath touched by his grace; and let him have all the praise.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—3. Jabesh-gilead had been desolated by the Israelites some time before: (*Jud.* c. xxi. v. 8—12:) but being now replenished, it was assaulted by the Ammonites, on whose borders it was situated; and it could in capitulation obtain no better terms, than for every man to have his right eye put out, and to be made a slave. Nor would their enemies have consented to a few days respite, but in confidence that they would not be helped, and that in consequence the nation of Israel would be the more disgraced.

V. 5. *After the herd*, &c.] Saul finding himself despised by some, and neglected by the most of the Israelites, returned quietly to his former occupations, and left the matter entirely to the providence of God. In this chapter he looks as great, as the much celebrated Roman dictator from the plough, and indeed greater; for he followed his herds after he was appointed to the kingdom by the Lord himself: yet when called forth to action, his vigour and success were not inferior to those of the renowned Roman.

V. 5—10.] Saul being fired with a generous indignation at the indignity offered Israel, in a very spirited, yet humble, and clement manner summoned the attendance of the people; and through the immediate influence of God upon their hearts a vast multitude assembled with surprising celerity: upon which he undertook, and performed a march perhaps of fifty miles, within the space of about twenty-four hours; and by this dispatch arrived in time to rescue their trembling brethren, and unexpectedly to assault, and destroy their insulting enemies.

V. 12—15.] Saul's success went further with the people, than either the Lord's appointment of him, or his personal accomplishments. And now the sons of Belial were saved from death, as well as Israel from the Ammonites, by him, whom they despised, as unable to save them. In this whole affair Saul's conduct was unexceptionable, and exemplary; and the whole was closed with such humanity, and piety, as promised better effects, than followed; the

the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1. *Samuel's protestation of his integrity, allowed of by the people, v.* 1—5. 2*d. His expostulation with them enforced by a thunder storm sent at his request, v.* 6—18. 3*d. The people's terror, and intreaties, and his assurances, and exhortations, v.* 20—25.

AND Samuel said unto all Israel, behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grey-headed; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3 Behold, here I *am:* witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

for external good conduct doth not always prove a gracious heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Hasty settlements amongst bad neighbours often produce multiplied calamities: and when professed Christians act inconsistent with the covenant of God, they may expect to be forced to the basest subjection to man: when they dishonour God, he will disgrace them, and make them a reproach to their vilest enemies. To save their lives men will part with their liberty, and even consent to have their eyes put out: is it then no part of wisdom to part with our right eye, rather than to be cast into hell-fire? Lusts, or interests, thus dear to our carnal hearts, must be crucified, if we would covenant with God for the life of our souls; and whatever respite he gives us, none can save us out of his hand: We must consent to his proposals, or perish. But tender mercy is couched under this apparently severe requisition; the dreaded operation will not be very painful, the advantages immense, and his service is perfect freedom. His Providence will bring forth those, whom he hath designed, and prepared for usefulness: nor will any repent of humbly waiting in obscurity, and honest industry, till he is pleased to call them forth; for only pride, and impatience can conclude, that the Lord hath lighted a candle to leave it under a bushel. The reproach of the gospel, the distresses of God's people, and the insulting triumphs of their enemies should not only cause our sympathizing sorrows, but our most decisive exertions in our several stations to redress such evils, yea our keen, and generous indignation. But magistrates in all cases should be sparing of the lives of their subjects, and only punish them in their property, when that can be made effectual. When zeal for the glory of God, and love for the brethren prompt men to earnestness, and vigorous efforts; and when God is pleased to concur, great effects may speedily be produced: but in critical junctures ordinary measures of dispatch are unmeaning. Deliverance in extreme distress is doubly welcome, and it is oft vouchsafed to the true Christian: but the destruction, which frequently overtakes the wicked in the height of their triumphs, and security, is inexpressibly dreadful. Humility and clemency add superior lustre to the most splendid actions: he, who forgives his enemies, when he has them in his power, obtains the noblest victory; and by giving the praise of illustrious exploits to God, a man acquires the most solid honour. The Lord delighteth to plead their cause, who are dumb under injuries, and do not plead for themselves; to put to silence those, who contend with his servants; and to work by those instruments, which man despises. Thus the despised Saviour will at length be universally acknowledged as the Lord's anointed king, with songs of triumph and praise: as yet, upon a mercy-seat he receives the submissions and pleads the cause of rebels, who are willing that he should reign over and save them: but shortly from his righteous tribunal he will condemn to everlasting ruin all those, who persist in their contempt of, and opposition to him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *And Samuel said,* &c.] The elders, and tribes of Israel being convened at Gilgal, where they had celebrated the late victory with sacrifices, &c, and confirmed the kingdom to Saul; Samuel embraced the opportunity of appealing to the people, and to their king, concerning his integrity, as their judge, when he was about to divest himself of his authority. By this he not only meant to clear his own character, but to set before Saul an instructive example, and to convince the people of their ingratitude to God, and to him.

V. 2. *And I am old,* &c.] If Samuel was about eighteen when Eli was killed, he would be thirty-eight when constituted judge at Mizpeh: from that event to the death of Saul we compute forty years. David was anointed not many years from the commencement of Saul's reign, we cannot suppose him to have been younger, than eighteen at that time, and he was thirty when Saul was killed; we may therefore suppose that Saul actually reigned about

5 And he ſaid unto them, The LORD *is* witneſs againſt you, and his anointed *is* witneſs this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they anſwered, *He is* witneſs.

6 And Samuel ſaid unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moſes and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now therefore ſtand ſtill, that I may reaſon with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD ſent Moſes and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9 And when they forgat the LORD their God, he ſold them into the hand of Siſera, captain of the hoſt of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philiſtines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought againſt them.

10 And they cried unto the LORD, and ſaid, We have ſinned, becauſe we have forſaken the LORD, and have ſerved Baalim and Aſhtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will ſerve thee.

11 And the LORD ſent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every ſide, and ye dwelled ſafe.

12 And when ye ſaw that Nahaſh, the king of the children of Ammon, came againſt you, ye ſaid unto me, Nay, but a king ſhall reign over us; when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have choſen, *and* whom ye have deſired! and, behold, the LORD hath ſet a king over you.

14 If ye will fear the LORD, and ſerve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel againſt the commandment of the LORD, then ſhall both ye, and alſo the king that reigneth over you, continue following the LORD your God.

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel againſt the commandment of the LORD; then ſhall the hand of the LORD be againſt you, as *it was* againſt your fathers.

16 Now therefore ſtand and ſee this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it* not wheat-harveſt to-day? I will call unto the LORD, and he ſhall ſend thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and ſee that your wickedneſs *is* great, which ye have done in the ſight of the LORD, in aſking you a king.

18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD ſent thunder and rain that day:

ſixteen, or ſeventeen years; and conſequently that Samuel was at this time about ſixty. From a child he had been labouring aſſiduouſly for their good, and was grown grey in their ſervice; yet they had at laſt rejected him! His ſons had indeed miſbehaved, and had been ſet aſide, and were there preſent, if they choſe to call them to an account: but for himſelf he could appeal to the Lord, and to their conſciences, and was even willing that their anointed king ſhould decide, whether he had not acted with equity, impartiality, and diſintereſtedneſs, during his whole adminiſtration. When they had in conſequence acknowledged his integrity, he did not expoſtulate further with them concerning their ill uſage of him; but endeavoured to convince them of their wickedneſs in the ſight of God.

V. 11, 12.] Bedan is probably another name for ſome of the judges, whoſe hiſtory hath been conſidered; perhaps for Samſon: Samuel adjoins his own name, in attempting to convince them, that in rejecting him, after all his ſervices, they had in effect rejected the government of God. It ſeems that the fear of Nahaſh influenced them in their peremptory demand of a king: whereas, if they had left it to the Lord, he would have protected them as effectually ſome other way.

V. 14, 15.] They might ſuppoſe, that under a king, to whom they might always apply for ſuccour, their affairs would not be expoſed to the ſame viciſſitudes as before. But Samuel aſſured them, that there would be no difference in that reſpect: for obedience would ſtill continue to enſure proſperity, and diſobedience would bring down judgments upon them: and that their privileges, as the Lord's peculiar people would ſtill be continued to them, as they had been before, by adhering to his ſervice, and not otherwiſe.

V. 17. *Is it not wheat-harveſt*, &c?] At that ſeaſon rain was very uncommon, this thunder-ſtorm was very violent; and being predicted, and prayed for, was an atteſtation of Samuel's word, and very ſuited to produce conviction, and alarm in their conſciences.

V. 18, 19. *Feared the Lord, and Samuel*, &c.] Being terrified with the diſplays of the Lord's power in anſwer to Samuel's prayers, and perceiving how much he was honoured of God, they were afraid of ſome immediate judgment upon them, ſuch as were inflicted on their forefathers for rebelling againſt Moſes, and Aaron. In this terror they earneſtly begged of him to pray for them, and not againſt them.

and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: (ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain:)

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23 Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

V. 20. *Fear not*, &c.] Samuel repeatedly exhorted them to fear the Lord; (v. 14. 23:) yet here he exhorted them not to fear; that is not to fear destruction, to their discouragement. A reverential fear of the divine Majesty, and a fear of his displeasure, when counterpoised by the hope of his favour, quicken men in seeking and serving him: but such a fear of wrath, as occasions despondency, and hard thoughts of God, drives men from their duty, and exposes them to manifold temptations. (*Note, Gen.* c. xlv. ver. 5.)

V. 22. *For the Lord*, &c.] In preferring the seed of Jacob to other families, to be his people, the Lord acted as a sovereign, who is not bound, and doth not deign to assign his reasons: but having made them his people, the honour of his perfections required that he should not forsake them, however severely he corrected them, till the promised seed was come.

V. 23. *God forbid*, &c.] The people had no occasion to fear Samuel's resentment; for he deemed himself bound in duty to persevere in praying for them, notwithstanding the affront, which they had put upon him. And though no longer their chief magistrate, he promised still to devote the remnant of his life to their service, as their religious instructor, and as determining their disputes in a subordinate station: in which senses he judged them all the days of his life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot justify ourselves before God by our obedience to his holy law, which requires perpetual, unfailing perfection in heart and life; but we may justify our conduct before our fellow creatures, if we have conscientiously behaved ourselves towards them: and under reproaches, and ingratitude the testimony of our conscience to our integrity may prove a source of comfort, and rejoicing, if we are true believers. The favoured few, who have walked before God from their childhood to old age, whilst they look upon their past lives with gratitude, as the sure evidences of their acceptance, and as confirming their expectation of eternal glory; may receive this satisfaction as a gracious recompence from the Lord; and may use it as an argument with the young, to seek, and serve him without delay.—There may be seasons, when we may properly vindicate our own characters; but it should be always in subserviency to the conviction, and edification of others; and we may speak of our own conduct, when we can thus convey any useful hints to our juniors, or successors: and men may recede from public stations with comfort, when they can extort from their very despisers a testimony to their integrity. The honour rendered to those, who are concluding their course, differs widely from the applause, and congratulation, which many meet with, when they first step forth before the public eye, and which often terminates in disgrace and contempt; and is therefore unworthy our wishes, and ought surely never to move a wise man's envy, though it be rendered at his expense. Prosperity in sin, is no proof of impunity; and sinners therefore never need to be warned more, than when successful in their undertakings. But the servants of God, though ill treated, should be careful not much to expostulate with those, who have injured them, about their behaviour to them: but to reason with them of the righteous acts of the Lord, and his truth and mercy towards them, and of their conduct towards him, for their humiliation before God. Our safe, and happy state consists in a willing dependance on, and subjection to the Lord: but we affect independence, and refuse obedience, by which we change substantial good, for an empty shadow; for the greatest outward prosperity only contributes to our felicity, when it induces us to fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice. Disobedience ensures misery, from generation to generation; whatever our station, or circumstance in life may be: and to be enabled to continue following the Lord, as his accepted servants, is the highest privilege, which we can enjoy. The most useful benefactors of mankind, who have spent their lives, and worn out their constitutions, in unceasing labours for the good of others, must not be surprised, if they are at length cast off with contempt, and ingratitude: and if the perverseness of their brethren prevents them from doing all that good, which they desired to do, they should still do all the good they can: this is a general rule for us all; they, who cannot rule, may teach, and they, who cannot teach, may pray, and shew an edifying example; and no provocations should tempt us to sin against God in ceasing to pray for children, relations, friends, people, fellow sinners, or even inveterate enemies. Yet the prayers of the church, and the intercession of Christ will in the event appear to have been united against impenitent sinners; and the elements, and the whole creation will shortly be armed against them to their destruction. The belief of this alarming truth should warn them to flee from the wrath

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Saul dimissing the people, and retaining a band of soldiers: after some delay smiting a garrison of the Philistines, and summoning the people to meet him, 1—3. *2d. The numerous army of the Philistines, and the terror, and dispersion of the Israelites,* 4—7. *3d. Saul sacrificing before Samuel's arrival, rebuked by him, rejected of God, and almost deserted by the people,* 8—16. *4th. The incursions of the Philistines, and the distressed, disarmed state of Israel,* 13—27.

SAUL reigned one year: and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel, *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash, and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba: and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea-shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7 And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead: as for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed:* but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he

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to come, to confess their sins, to obey the gospel of Christ, and to desire the prayers, and counsels of his ministers. But when sinners are deeply convinced of their guilt, and danger, they will need encouragement, lest their fear should issue in despondency. In the day of judgment all those things, which men have inordinately loved, and for which they have forsaken the Lord, will be found vain, and such as cannot profit or deliver, even though they were the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. Happy then are they, whom the Lord hath pleased to make his people! he will never leave or forsake them, but will glorify himself in their eternal salvation. But none can know assuredly, that these blessings belong to them, except they attend to "the good, and right way, and fear the Lord, and serve "him with all their heart:" and if "we consider what "great things he hath done for us," especially in the great work of redemption, we can neither want motive, encouragement, or assistance for so doing.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—4.] After Saul had defeated Nahash, and been confirmed in the kingdom; after he had joined with Samuel in offering sacrifices, and intreated the benefit of his prayers, he should have marched his victorious army immediately against the Philistines: but elated with success, pleased with the shew of royalty, and disposed to ease, and indulgence, he, for the present, dismissed the bulk of the people, retaining only a small number for his guard, and the support of his authority over the Israelites. Thus their ardour was abated, and probably many of them were disgusted; and for above a year the Philistines had time to prepare for war, and to weaken, and disarm the Israelites; which they did most assiduously, knowing that their king had been chosen on purpose to shake off their yoke. In the mean time Jonathan, probably by Saul's command, and as some imagine, contrary to treaty, destroyed a garrison of the Philistines; and thus exasperated them, before they were prepared to receive them. Nay Israel was had in abomination by the Philistines; they not only resented the affront, but abhorred their perfidy. And when Saul at length sounded the alarm, the people, dissatisfied with his management, or terrified with the power of the enemy, either did not come to him, or speedily deserted him. In all this Saul was very impolitic: but the Lord intended to chastise the people for their sins, to expose their folly in expecting, that a king could save them, and to prepare the way for a glorious deliverance, which he intended to effect for them.

V. 5. *Thirty thousand chariots*, &c.] The Philistines had doubtless collected troops on this emergency from all the surrounding nations; but the number of chariots is so immensely large, that commentators conjecture, that it included also all their carriages for baggage, &c.

V. 7. *All the people*, &c.] All the people, who were capable of bearing arms, who had not hid themselves, or fled beyond Jordan.

V. 8—9. *And he tarried*, &c.] (*Note*, c. x. v. 8.) According to the direction before given, and perhaps since

had

had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might ſalute him.

11 And Samuel ſaid, What haſt thou done? And Saul ſaid, Becauſe I ſaw that the people were ſcattered from me, and *that* thou cameſt not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philiſtines gathered themſelves together at Michmaſh;

12 Therefore ſaid I, the Philiſtines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made ſupplication unto the LORD: I forced myſelf therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.

13 And Samuel ſaid to Saul, thou haſt done fooliſhly: thou haſt not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have eſtabliſhed thy kingdom upon Iſrael for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom ſhall not continue; the LORD hath ſought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, becauſe thou haſt not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

15 And Samuel aroſe, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* preſent with him, about ſix hundred men.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his ſon, and the people *that were* preſent with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philiſtines encamped in Michmaſh.

17 And the ſpoilers came out of the camp of the Philiſtines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that *leadeth to* Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

18 And another company turned the way *to* Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border, that looketh to the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderneſs.

19 Now there was no ſmith found throughout all the land of Iſrael: (for the Philiſtines ſaid, Leſt the Hebrews make *them* ſwords or ſpears:)

20 But all the Iſraelites went down to the Philiſtines, to ſharpen every man his ſhare, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to ſharpen the goads.

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repeated, Saul tarried for Samuel until the ſeventh day: but before the cloſe of it, being impatient of his ſituation, perhaps diſpleaſed with Samuel for not coming ſooner, and attributing the people's terror and deſertion to his abſence, and the want of ſome token of the Lord's preſence with them; he proceeded to offer ſacrifices, contrary to the expreſs injunction, that had been laid upon him: and, as no mention is made of any prieſt being employed, he is ſuppoſed to have officiated himſelf, as if his appointment to the kingdom would authoriſe his intruſion into the prieſthood: and perhaps he was vainly pleaſed in aſſerting before the people that he could ſacrifice for himſelf, and was not dependent on, and had no occaſion for Samuel.

V. 12. *I forced myſelf*, &c.] When Samuel came, Saul went out to meet him, and ſalute, or bleſs him, as one well ſatisfied with what he had done, and who expected to be approved for it. But when he perceived that Samuel was diſpleaſed, he attempted to excuſe himſelf by the plea of neceſſity, and the reluctance, with which he had done it, leſt the Philiſtines ſhould attack him before he had performed his devotions. But he might, without blame, have made his ſupplications unto the Lord, without preſuming to offer ſacrifices, and to diſobey his command by his prophet, who had anointed him to the kingdom. His dependance on ſuch performances detected the formality of his religion.

V. 13. *Thou haſt not*, &c.] This commandment was probably intended as a teſt of Saul's diſpoſition, and his tranſgreſſion proved, that he regarded not the word of the Lord, when it interfered with his own inclinations or ſentiments, whereby he was ſhewn to be unfit to rule as God's vicegerent over his people. He was weighed in this balance, and found wanting. Had he behaved properly, the kingdom would have been confirmed in his family, but now he was ſentenced to be removed, to make way for one of a more tractable diſpoſition. This the Lord foreſaw, but his ſecret purpoſe was not the motive of Saul's conduct; which to the Searcher of all hearts might appear much more aggravated, than it doth to us. Though Samuel on this occaſion departed from Saul: yet, as he went to Gibeah, and came to him afterwards, it is conjectured that the ſentence was not irreverſible; but that, if he had repented of this ſin, and been more obedient in future, he might have been continued in the kingdom.

V. 19. *No ſmith found*, &c.] The Philiſtines had probably long practiſed this policy; but they had uſed peculiar aſſiduity, and ſucceſs during the laſt year, whilſt they were preparing for war: which diſplays the inattention of Saul, and the tameneſs of the people, in ſubmitting to ſo great an oppreſſion. As ſome parts of the land were very diſtant from the country of the Philiſtines, it hath been conjectured that ſmiths of that nation were ſent amongſt them; who both would impoveriſh them by demanding an exorbitant price for their work, and ſerve as ſpies and informers, if any Iſraelite attempted to learn or practiſe that trade.

22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains 1st. The Philistines marvellously routed by Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, and pursued by Saul and the Israelites, 1—23. 2d. Saul's rash curse, whereby the people were tempted to sin; Jonathan's life was endangered, though rescued by the people; and the further pursuit of their enemies was prevented, 24—46. 3d. Saul's exploits and family, 47—52.

NOW it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines garrison that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father.

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part

V. 22. *There was neither sword*, &c.] The Israelites used bows, slings, and javelins in war, and with these perhaps the people were armed: perhaps the Philistines had seized the armour, which they had used against Nahash, after they were dispersed; and many, who had armour, might have deserted. However, in the providence of God, it was so ordered, that none but Saul, and Jonathan, had either sword, or spear. Thus they, who expected to look formidable, under kingly government, were made to appear very contemptible: not that the Lord had forsaken his people; but because he would humble them, and shew them, that the victory did not depend upon swords, and spears, but upon the favour and assistance of the Almighty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our sanguine expectations from creatures are sure to issue in disappointment: and when we resolve to choose for ourselves, we shall certainly have cause to repent of our self-will. And when men are lifted up in self-sufficiency, they are often left to the most unaccountable infatuation. The chief advantages of the enemies of the church, are derived from the misconduct of it's professed friends: for when these act inconsistent with equity and fidelity, religious people without discrimination are looked upon with abhorrence, and contempt. Yet whilst sinners are studying to revenge themselves, the Lord often restrains their malice by invisible boundaries, and uses their machinations for the chastisement of his people. When deep resentment and great power are united, they occasion great consternation, and men thus terrified will flee, or hide themselves from their fellow-creatures: How then will the terror of the Almighty appal the wicked in the approaching day of his inevitable, and intolerable wrath? At that awful time there will be no place to flee to, or take refuge in: let us then in the believing expectation of it, without delay seek the Lord upon a mercy-seat, through the great peace-maker Jesus Christ. When men in trouble are counselled by their pride, and impatience, they will involve themselves in still deeper guilt, and misery, by their foolish expedients to extricate themselves: our observance of the Lord's directions will always bear an exact proportion to our faith in his protection, and our submission to his will: and they who are most dilatory in doing their duty, are commonly the most impatient of delay in waiting the Lord's time of deliverance from trouble. Our disposition to obey, or disobey God will often be decisively proved, by our behaviour, in apparently small things: and they, who most neglect the duties of their own station in life, are most forward to censure the supposed negligence of others, and to intrude into the work, which belongs to their fellow-servants: but by minding, and keeping to our own business, we shall best approve ourselves to our common Lord. Men destitute of inward piety, are frequently most scrupulously attached to the forms of godliness: nay they fancy that the Lord will accept them, because they force themselves to act contrary to their own inclinations, or even to the dictates of their natural conscience! We are commanded not to speak evil of rulers; yet they, who are called to speak to them in God's name, must point out to them very plainly, the folly, and evil of their conduct, and remind them of the anger of the Lord against workers of iniquity, without respect of persons: for though a prince may not in this life lose his throne, or his dignity, by his offences against God; yet if he die impenitent he will certainly lose his soul in the world to come: how empty then are those distinctions, from which so many are hurried into everlasting misery? Whatever is our station in life, may we by divine grace be made men after the Lord's own heart, and we shall certainly inherit the throne of glory in the blissful regions above. Sin hath indeed forfeited our felicity; but unbelief, and impenitency ratify that forfeiture: and they, who have undeniably broke the commandments of God, yet persist in excusing, and justifying themselves, are evidently both impenitent and unbelievers. The trouble of such persons must certainly increase upon them, whilst they continue in that temper; and as they refuse to submit to God, they may be reduced to the most abject misery in the slavery of sin. But, whilst the Lord pours contempt upon proud princes, and brings to nought all the honourable of the earth, he will deliver his people by his own power: and whilst he shames those who trust in man, he will honour those who expect help from him alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 3. *And Ahiah*, &c.] After Samuel had left Saul, he probably sent to Shiloh for Ahiah, or Abimelech, (*Ch.* xxii. v. 9,) Eli's great grandson, who was invested with the High Priesthood. Having him in the camp, with his priestly garments, and the breast-plate of judgment, and having fetched the ark thither also; (though the fate of Eli's sons might have shewn him the folly of that presumptuous measure,) Saul appeared to himself, and to the people to be very religious, and to have abundant tokens of the Lord's presence with him: and he

of Gibeah, under a pomegranate-tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about ſix hundred men;

3 And Ahiah, the ſon of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the ſon of Phinehas, the ſon of Eli, the LORD's prieſt in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4 And between the paſſages by which Jonathan ſought to go over unto the Philiſtines garriſon, *there was* a ſharp rock on the one ſide, and a ſharp rock on the other ſide: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5 The fore-front of the one *was* ſituate northward over againſt Michmaſh, and the other ſouthward over againſt Gibeah.

6 And Jonathan ſaid to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garriſon of theſe uncircumciſed; it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no reſtraint to the LORD to ſave by many or by few.

7 And his armour-bearer ſaid unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then ſaid Jonathan, Behold, we will paſs over unto *theſe* men, and we will diſcover ourſelves unto them.

9 If they ſay thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will ſtand ſtill in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they ſay thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand; and this *ſhall be* a ſign unto us.

11 And both of them diſcovered themſelves unto the garriſon of the Philiſtines: and the Philiſtines ſaid, Behold the Hebrews come forth out the holes where they had hid themſelves.

12 And the men of the garriſon anſwered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and ſaid, Come up to us, and we will ſhew you a thing. And Jonathan ſaid unto his armour-bearer, Come up after me, for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Iſrael.

13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer ſlew after him.

14 And that firſt ſlaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half-acre of land, *which* a yoke *of oxen might plow*.

15 And there was trembling in the hoſt, in the field, and among all the people; the garriſon, and the ſpoilers, they alſo trembled;

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could now inquire of the Lord, as he thought, without being liable to Samuel's ſharp reproofs, as Ahiah would be more compliant towards him. But the Lord poured contempt upon this formal preparation, whilſt Saul's heart was unhumbled, and impenitent; and in delivering Iſrael he ſelected another inſtrument, who neither conſulted Saul or the High-Prieſt in reſpect of his conduct.

V. 4—5.] The hand of God was very viſible in reſtraining this vaſt army of the Philiſtines from aſſaulting, and diſperſing the ſmall remaining company of the Iſraelites; and in their keeping entrenched in their camp, in an almoſt inacceſſible ſituation, as if they ſtill feared the enfeebled Iſraelites.

V. 6—10.] The faith of Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, was doubtleſs very ſtrong at other times: but the thought of marching againſt this vaſt army, and attacking them, was doubtleſs ſuggeſted to Jonathan's mind immediately from God, and his faith, and expectation increaſed in proportion to the extraordinary attempt: and he was enabled *with reference to his own conduct*, to view the almighty power of God, as ſufficient for his ſafeguard in the midſt of the Philiſtines; and alſo to ſave Iſrael by him, and his armour-bearer, as well as by the moſt numerous, and powerful army, (2 *Chron.* c. xiv. v. 11:) and conſidering the Iſraelites as the covenant people of God, who were oppreſſed by the uncircumciſed Philiſtines, he expected that the Lord would appear for them in the ſame wonderful manner on this occaſion, as he had for their fathers in former times; and in this hope he was confirmed by the chearful concurrence of the armour-bearer, whoſe mind had been raiſed to the ſame faith and expectation: thus they, as it were, ſaid, "Here we are, Lord ſend us." But for their fuller ſatisfaction in this matter, they agreed upon a token, according to which their proceedings were to be determined: if adviſed by the Philiſtines to tarry till they were attacked, they would conſider it as a divine monition, to keep their ground, and act upon the defenſive; but if they called to them to come up, they would take it as a ſignal to climb the rock, and attack them. Such extraordinary attempts, and triumphs of faith are recorded for our admiration, and encouragement in our more ordinary ſervices; and not for our imitation.

V. 11—15.] It ſeems to have been early in the morning, when Jonathan, and his armour-bearer placed themſelves in the view of the Philiſtines, who in contempt challenged them "to come up, and they would ſhew them a "thing," meaning that they would cauſe them to repent of their audacity; which being the expected token from God, Jonathan was perſuaded himſelf, and aſſured his ar-

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and the earth quaked: ſo it was a very great trembling.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked: and behold the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*.

17 Then ſaid Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and ſee who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold Jonathan and his armour-bearer *were* not *there*.

18 And Saul ſaid unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God: (for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Iſrael.)

19 And it came to paſs, while Saul talked unto the prieſt, that the noiſe that *was* in the hoſt of the Philiſtines went on and increaſed; and Saul ſaid unto the prieſt, Withdraw thine hand.

20 And Saul and all the people that *were* with him aſſembled themſelves, and they came to the battle: and behold every man's ſword was againſt his fellow, *and there was* a very great diſcomfiture.

21 Moreover the Hebrews *that* were with the Philiſtines before that time, which went up with them into the camp, *from the country* round about, even they alſo *turned* to be with the Iſraelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewiſe all the men of Iſrael which had hid themſelves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philiſtines fled, even they alſo followed hard after them in the battle.

23 So the LORD ſaved Iſrael that day: and the battle paſſed over unto Beth-aven.

24 And the men of Iſrael were diſtreſſed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, ſaying, Curſed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people taſted *any* food.

25 And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

28 Then anſwered one of the people, and ſaid, Thy father ſtraitly charged the people with an oath, ſaying, Curſed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.

29 Then ſaid Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: ſee, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, becauſe I taſted a little of this honey.

30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the ſpoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater ſlaughter among the Philiſtines?

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mour-bearer, that the Lord would deliver them by their means into the hand of Iſrael: and ſo they both without heſitation climbed up the rock, into the enemy's camp, apparently ruſhing into the jaws of deſtruction: but by the immediate interpoſition of God, the Philiſtines were ſo confounded at this daring aſſault, that they fell down without reſiſtance before Jonathan, and were diſpatched by his armour-bearer; till twenty were ſlaughtered in a ſmall ſpace, without attempting either to fight, or to flee. Upon which the whole army was ſeized with trembling and conſternation, and an earthquake, which took place at the ſame moment, increaſed their terror; ſo that it was "a trembling of "God," the whole being, not only very great, but altogether miraculous: in conſequence of which, they ſuppoſed the Iſraelites to have been in the midſt of the camp, and began to ſlay one another, in every part of it.

V. 16—23.] This being obſerved by the centinels of Saul's ſmall army, and none being abſent from the camp, but Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, great ſurpriſe was occaſioned: and Saul prepared to conſult the Lord, whether he ought to attack the Philiſtines or no; but his impatient ſpirit could no more wait for Ahiah's anſwer, than for Samuel's arrival: but perceiving the commotion ſtill increaſing, he haſtily determined to march againſt them: though he might juſtly have queſtioned, whether the Lord, who had begun the work without him, would accept of his aſſiſtance; at leaſt there could not be ſuch want of it, but that he might ſtay till he had inquired the Lord's will, and received orders to engage, (c. xxx. 7, 8.) And though the Lord in ſaving Iſrael, was pleaſed to make uſe of theſe forces, as well as of the deſerters and fugitives; yet his haſty interpoſition, and his ſubſequent raſhneſs were rebuked in ſuch a manner, as to prevent the complete deſtruction of their enemies.

V. 24—35.] The abſolute prohibition of all food to the ſoldiers for the whole day was very impolitic; though

31 And

31 And they ſmote the Philiſtines that day from Michmaſh to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.

32 And the people flew upon the ſpoil, and took ſheep, and oxen, and calves, and ſlew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, ſaying, Behold, the people ſin againſt the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he ſaid, Ye have tranſgreſſed: roll a great ſtone unto me this day.

34 And Saul ſaid, Diſperſe yourſelves among the people, and ſay unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his ſheep, and ſlay *them* here, and eat; and ſin not againſt the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and ſlew *them* there.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the ſame was the firſt altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 And Saul ſaid, Let us go down after the Philiſtines by night, and ſpoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they ſaid, Do whatſoever ſeemeth good unto thee. Then ſaid the prieſt, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37 And Saul aſked counſel of God, Shall I go down after the Philiſtines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Iſrael? But he anſwered him not that day.

38 And Saul ſaid, Draw ye near hither all the chief of the people; and know and ſee wherein this ſin hath been this day:

39 For *as* the LORD liveth, which ſaveth Iſrael, though it be in Jonathan my ſon, he ſhall ſurely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* anſwered him.

40 Then ſaid he unto all Iſrael, Be ye on one ſide, and I and Jonathan my ſon will be on the other ſide. And the people ſaid unto Saul, Do what ſeemeth good unto thee.

41 Therefore Saul ſaid unto the LORD God of Iſrael, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people eſcaped.

42 And Saul ſaid, Caſt *lots* between me and Jonathan my ſon. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul ſaid to Jonathan, Tell me what thou haſt done. And Jonathan told him, and ſaid, I did but taſte a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I muſt die.

44 And Saul anſwered, God do ſo, and more alſo: for thou ſhalt ſurely die, Jonathan.

Saul might properly have cautioned them not to waſte their time about taking food, on penalty of his diſpleaſure: but to accompany the prohibition with that awful curſe, whereby the enemies of God were devoted to utter deſtruction, was profane, and raſh in the extreme: and it was the more inexcuſable, in that he did not ſay, "that the Lord may "avenge Iſrael on his enemies;" but "that I may be "avenged on mine enemies." The people fearing the curſe abſtained from the honey, which was laid in their way, and with which without any loſs of time, they might have refreſhed themſelves, and been enabled to have made a much greater ſlaughter of the Philiſtines: and in the evening, being almoſt fainting with labour and hunger, they were tempted haſtily to kill the cattle, which they had taken, and to eat the fleſh, without evacuating the blood, as the law commanded them, until they were reſtrained by Saul's authority. And Jonathan, ignorant of the curſe, when ready to faint with fatigue, having eaten a little honey, by which he was ſenſibly, and viſibly revived, ſo that his eyes which were dim and languiſhing, were enlightened, and looked lively, found himſelf caught in a ſnare, and expoſed to the moſt imminent danger.

V. 35. *And Saul built*, &c.] He converted the great ſtone, on which the cattle had been ſlaughtered, into an altar, on which ſacrifices were probably offered, before they attempted to proceed any further. He built this his firſt altar, when diſregarding Samuel, he had begun to apoſtatize from God.

V. 36—44. *Let us draw near*, &c.] Ahiah, having been before interrupted by Saul's impatience, very properly propoſed on this occaſion to reſume his enquiring of the Lord: and when no anſwer was returned, Saul juſtly concluded, that the Lord was offended, and he deſired to diſcover the cauſe: but, if he had been humbly ſenſible of the evil of his own paſt conduct, he would not have needed to enquire any further. However the Lord was pleaſed, that the conduct of Jonathan, who had unwarily expoſed himſelf to his father's curſe, ſhould be diſcovered, as the cauſe, why he would not anſwer the High Prieſt's inquiries: that the people might underſtand how much they were intereſted in the conduct of their king; and be convinced of their folly in rejecting the government of a pious prophet, whoſe prayers brought down bleſſings upon them; for that of a king, whoſe curſes brought down wrath upon them. In the ſame raſh, and profane ſpirit, Saul, before the lots were caſt, ſware by the Lord, that if Jonathan were the offender, (ſuſpecting any one more than himſelf,) he ſhould ſurely die; without knowing whether the crime committed deſerved death, or whether it might not be expiated by a ſin-offering: and after the lots had been caſt,

45 And the people ſaid unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great ſalvation in Iſrael? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there ſhall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people reſcued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philiſtines: and the Philiſtines went to their own place.

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Iſrael, and fought againſt all his enemies on every ſide, againſt Moab, and againſt the children of Ammon, and againſt Edom, and againſt the kings of Zobah, and againſt the Philiſtines, and whitherſoever he turned himſelf he vexed *them.*

48 And he gathered an hoſt, and ſmote the Amalekites, and delivered Iſrael out of the hands of them that ſpoiled them.

49 Now the ſons of Saul were Jonathan, and Iſhui, and Melchi-ſhua: and the names of his two daughters *were theſe*; the name of the firſt-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the captain of his hoſt *was* Abner the ſon of Ner, Saul's uncle:

51 And Kiſh *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the ſon of Abiel.

52 And there was ſore war againſt the Philiſtines all the days of Saul: and when Saul ſaw any ſtrong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

(with prayer, as probably was the conſtant practice,) and Jonathan was taken, with an affected ſternneſs; without any humiliation for his own ſin, in thus raſhly troubling Iſrael: as one, who pretended to be very zealous for God's glory, and for the obligation of an oath; but who was really very tenacious of his own will, and authority, and as regardleſs of Juſtice, as of natural affection, he with tremendous execrations upon himſelf, proceeded to denounce the ſentence of death upon his own pious ſon.

V. 45. *And the people ſaid*, &c.] They judged very rightly, that the guilt was contracted by, and the rebuke intended for Saul, who raſhly vented ſuch tremendous curſes; not for Jonathan, who innocently was brought within the reach of them: and therefore they reſcued the inſtrument of their extraordinary deliverance from the hands of his ſevere parent. And though Saul could not but deſire the life of his ſon: yet conſidering him, as decidedly preferred before himſelf, both by the Lord, and Iſrael; and knowing that Jonathan's deliverance was a ſevere rebuke of his raſhneſs; and perhaps apprehending, as was indeed the caſe, that his own repeated curſes would light on his own head; he returned home evidently diſſatisfied, and diſpleaſed: thus the opportunity of completing the deſtruction of the Philiſtines was loſt; nor could it be expected, that an expedition, which was begun, and conducted ſo very ill, ſhould terminate without ſome evident tokens of the divine diſpleaſure againſt Saul; though the Lord's love to Iſrael was diſplayed in an unparalleled manner, through the faith, and courage of his pious ſon Jonathan. Through Saul's miſconduct, and as if in anſwer to his imprecations, Jonathan was excluded from the kingdom, and ſlain with him by the Philiſtines, when the Lord did unto him as he intended to do unto his ſon, "and more alſo;" having indeed devoted him to utter deſtruction. Yet after this Saul was proſperous in many of his wars, as appears in the cloſe of this chapter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſame principle, which induces men to ſeek relief from the accuſations of their conſciences, by abounding in the externals of religion, will lead them to ſeek refuge from the warnings, and reproofs of faithful miniſters, by paying court to others, who, with ſome ſemblance of truth, and piety, prove more compliant to their will; and either, out of miſtake, timidity, or unfaithfulneſs, give them leſs diſturbance in their ſins: but God will ſhew a marked diſapprobation of ſuch attendance on his own ordinances, or profeſſion of his truths, as are intended to quiet the conſcience, or ſupport the credit of ſinners, who perſiſt in diſobeying the plain precepts of his holy word. Such hypocrites often ſhew their indifference about the religion, which they profeſſedly chooſe; for as it has no practical energy upon them, a ſmall matter induces them to diſpenſe with the uſeleſs form: and in ſearching the ſcriptures, or hearing the word preached, they evidence, that they do not really enquire the will of God, that they may do it; but only deſire to have their curioſity gratified, their ſentiments corroborated, and their ſelf flattery increaſed: for they diſregard, or reject all, that anſwers not theſe purpoſes. No warnings or examples are ſufficient to convince men of the folly, and danger of truſting in the forms of godlineſs, whilſt they neglect the power of it; but from age to age numbers will proceed in the ſame deſtructive path. But bleſſed be God, every age alſo produces illuſtrious inſtances of thoſe, who being ſtrong in faith, give glory unto God; and its triumphs are proportioned to its ſtrength. Whilſt we are obeying the commands, truſting in the protection, and ſeeking the glory of God, neither the ſenſe of our own weakneſs, nor the power of our enemies ſhould diſmay us; "for there is no reſtraint to the Lord to ſave by many or "by few." Though we may not now expect miraculous interpoſitions; yet the feebleſt inſtrument, who ſincerely, and in faith uſes the appointed means, in order to ſubvert ſatan's kingdom of ignorance, error, and wickedneſs, may expect conſiderable ſucceſs; for "it may be that the Lord will "work with him:" and then the weapons of his warfare will prove mighty, and no force of the enemies of our God

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. Saul commissioned to destroy Amalek, v. 1—3. 2d. His preparation, caution to the Kenites, success, and partiality in executing his commission; v. 4—9. 3d. Samuel sent to him, their conference, and Saul convicted of disobedience, and sentenced to lose his kingdom, v. 10—31. 4th. Samuel slaying Agag king of Amalek, and finally departing from Saul, v. 32—35.

SAMUEL also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred

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and his Christ, can stand before him. Before his frown the mightiest armies melt away, or prove instruments of each other's destruction: what then will be the consternation and horror, when the whole world shall be assembled before his tribunal, and the wicked shall be cast into hell, yea all the nations that forget God? His cause will at last appear the strongest; and all men shall either be emboldened to embrace it, or be convinced of their madness in refusing to do so, when invited by his gracious word. But in the midst of the most glorious successes one sinner often destroyeth much good: and rash zeal is as hurtful, as timid inaction. It indeed becomes an Israelite to be superior to the cravings of his appetites: but there is neither prudence, or piety in restraining men, from partaking of the bounty of God's providence, when placed honestly within their reach; and when it is so used, as not to take men off from, but to prepare them for, and encourage them in his service. They are indeed troublers of Israel, who prohibit such use of God's good creatures: and the curses, with which they sanction their antichristian mandates, will fall upon their own heads; and they will be answerable for all the consequences; for restraints from things lawful prove temptations to forbidden indulgences; and a superstitious zeal about externals hath often hindered men from performing essential services to the church of God. When rulers by authority would withhold men from transgression, and yet in their own conduct give them an example of disobedience to God, they can expect but little success. We are too much in haste in our most important employments, if we cannot allow ourselves time to consult the Lord, and seek his blessing; and ministers should plainly remind those, who are running into this common mistake. When our prayers are not answered, we may safely conclude, that iniquity withholds good from us, and we should make diligent search for it; but we should always first suspect, and examine ourselves: whereas an unhumbled heart, suspects every other person, and looks every where, but at home, for the sinful cause of calamity. They, who are most indulgent to their own sins, are generally most severe in animadverting upon the faults of others: and they, who most disregard God's authority, are most impatient when their own commands appear to be slighted, or their reputation eclipsed; and by severity against small sins, they will endeavour to varnish over their own enormous transgressions. Such as delight in cursing, will have enough of it, and the habit of swearing will be sure to involve a man in the guilt of perjury, as well as of profaneness; and though now concealed, his iniquity will be sure to find him out. But no oath can bind a man to commit injustice: the rash swearer should repent of his iniquity, and not add one crime to another: and all men should join to rescue the innocent from punishment: and in this world, if they, who have wrought with God, and been remarkably useful to his people, escape persecution, and death, as their recompence, they are more favoured than those, who have gone before them, and need not expect much advantage to themselves from their usefulness, till they come to heaven. In the midst of mercy the Lord will rebuke his people for their sins; and by mismanagement men lose the comfort of their successes, and are discontented, and filled with vexation, in the midst of blessings. But the Lord employs even wicked men as instruments of providential good to his people; and in temporal prosperity they forget their sins, and the threatened wrath of God; and thus blaze for a moment, like a meteor, and then are put out in utter darkness. Lord, let us rather be chastened here, than thus prosper, and be condemned with the world!

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—3.] For some time Saul seems to have taken no notice of Samuel in his wars, and successes; perhaps resenting the sharp rebuke, that he had before given him, (c. xiii. v. 13.) But now Samuel was sent to him with an express command to go, and utterly destroy the Amalekites. In delivering his message the prophet reminded him, that he had been sent by the Lord to anoint him king, and that he now came by the same authority: and he intimated plainly, that if he did not "hearken to the "voice of the words of the Lord," he should be authorised to denounce the sentence of rejection against him; and he gave him his instructions in the most explicit, and particular manner. The Amalekites had long before been condemned (*Ex.* c. xvii. v. 14:) but they had been hitherto spared, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquities. We are sure, that the righteous Lord did no injustice to any individuals; and the example was of a salutary tendency, to deter others in future ages from meddling to their hurt with the servants of the living God.

V. 4. *Two hundred thousand*, &c.] This vast number, which was collected, when Samuel directed the enterprize, shews that the people had much more confidence in their rejected prophet, than in the king, whom they had so inordinately desired. The disproportionate number of Judah,

thouſand footmen, and ten thouſand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6 And Saul ſaid unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, leſt I deſtroy you with them: for ye ſhewed kindneſs to all the children of Iſrael when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites,

7 And Saul ſmote the Amalekites from Havilah, *until* thou comeſt to Shur, that *is* over againſt Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly deſtroyed all the people with the edge of the ſword.

9 But Saul and the people ſpared Agag, and the beſt of the ſheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly deſtroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuſe that they deſtroyed utterly.

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, ſaying,

11 It repenteth me that I have ſet up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12 And when Samuel roſe early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, ſaying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he ſet him up a place, and is gone about, and paſſed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Samuel ſaid, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the ſheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul ſaid, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people ſpared the beſt of the ſheep and of the oxen, to ſacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the reſt we have utterly deſtroyed.

16 Then Samuel ſaid unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath ſaid to me this night. And he ſaid unto him, ſay on.

17 And Samuel ſaid, When thou *waſt* little in thine own ſight, *waſt* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Iſrael, and the LORD anointed thee king over Iſrael?

18 And the LORD ſent thee on a journey,

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was perhaps the effect of their diſſatisfaction with a king of another tribe.

V. 8, 9.] The Lord had devoted the whole multitude, and all their ſubſtance to utter deſtruction, as a ſacrifice to his juſtice: but Saul, though compaſſion did not induce him to ſpare the women or children; yet in complaiſance to royalty, and to grace his victory, he ſpared Agag their king; and in covetouſneſs he ſpared the beſt of their flocks, and herds, deſtroying only the refuſe of them. As the commandment had been expreſs, and particular, and a teſt of his diſpoſition to obey God, his conduct was evidently the effect of a proud rebellious ſpirit. As many Amalekites eſcaped, probably without his fault, we ſhall read of them, as a people hereafter.

V. 11. *It repenteth*, &c.] (*Note*, *Gen.* c. vi. v. 6.) The Lord's change of conduct towards Saul was ſimilar to that change in our conduct, which ſprings from repentance: though by the whole he accompliſhed his wiſe and righteous purpoſes. Samuel was ſoon reconciled to the people's rejection of him, and his family, and chearfully anointed Saul to ſuperſede himſelf. But he had hoped that the change would have proved a bleſſing to Iſrael; and from Saul's firſt actions he had framed a favourable opinion of him. When therefore Saul was rejected, he was exceeding grieved, both on his account, and that of the people; and he interceded all night for the reverſal of the ſentence, and that he might not be charged with this painful commiſſion.

V. 12. *Set him up a place*, &c.] That is ſome trophy, as a monument of his victory: the whole verſe implies, that Saul took great ſtate upon himſelf, and was not a little elated with his ſucceſs.

V. 13. *Bleſſed be thou*, &c.] Saul was conſcious of having done wrong, and addreſſed Samuel in this reſpectful language, in order to conciliate his good-will, and to ward off the rebuke, which he was afraid of.

V. 15. *To ſacrifice*, &c.] We cannot determine whether Saul, or the people had any intention to offer all this cattle in ſacrifice; but probably it was a mere pretence: however, if it were ſo, to ſpare thoſe, whom the Lord had devoted to deſtruction, was to oppoſe man's will, and wiſdom againſt the Lord's: and doubtleſs they intended to ſave their own cattle by means of them. It is obſervable, that Saul took all the merit of his obedience to himſelf; but he threw all the blame of the diſobedience upon the people: and though Samuel charged it upon his greedineſs of the ſpoil, he returned to the ſame plea again, and again. But had he exerted his authority with as much deciſion in ſupport of God's command, as he had done before in enforcing his own prohibition; and had he been as determined in executing vengeance upon Agag, as he was diſpoſed to be in putting his ſon to death, no oppoſition, it may be ſuppoſed, would have been made to his orders.

V. 18. *On a journey*, &c.] The expedition was ſo

and

and ſaid, Go, and utterly deſtroy the ſinners the Amalekites, and fight againſt them until they be conſumed.

19 Wherefore then didſt thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didſt flee upon the ſpoil, and didſt evil in the ſight of the LORD?

20 And Saul ſaid unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD ſent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly deſtroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the ſpoil, ſheep and oxen, the chief of the things which ſhould have been utterly deſtroyed, to ſacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel ſaid, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than ſacrifice; *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion *is as* the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs *is as* iniquity and idolatry: becauſe thou haſt rejected the word of the LORD, he hath alſo rejected thee from *being* king.

24 And Saul ſaid unto Samuel, I have ſinned: for I have tranſgreſſed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words; becauſe I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my ſin, and turn again with me, that I may worſhip the LORD.

26 And Samuel ſaid unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou haſt rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Iſrael.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the ſkirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel ſaid unto him, The LORD

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proſperous, that it was more like a ſafe, and eaſy journey, than a laborious, and perilous warfare.

V. 22. *Behold, to obey*, &c.] The ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding to divine inſtruction, and of the will to the authority of God muſt be eſſential to true religion under every diſpenſation: but there is a great difference betwixt the ſubmiſſion of an holy, and that of a ſinful creature. The external obedience to the precepts of the moral law is good, only ſo far as it ſprings from a willing internal ſubmiſſion to the divine authority: the profeſſion of the truths of the goſpel is good, only when it ariſes from this internal ſubmiſſion to the divine teaching, to the juſtice of the condemnation, under which ſinners are concluded, and to the wiſdom, ſuitableneſs, and grace of the method of ſalvation therein revealed. All inſtituted worſhip derives its value from the expreſs appointment of God, from the honour, which it renders to his name, from the diſpoſition of the worſhipper, and from the grace and ſpiritual bleſſings, which are thereby communicated. Sacrifices eſpecially declared the deſert of the offender, and typified the ſufferings of the Saviour: their value was derived from the divine appointment; and they were not acceptable, except offered in *obedience* to his authority, and with a penitent and pious mind. When therefore they were ſubſtituted in the place of true piety, or truſted in as meritorious; when the means were uſed to compenſate for the neglect of the end, and the ſign was exalted into the place of the thing ſignified, they became an abomination, however coſtly, and numerous they were. Had Saul offered thouſands of bullocks, and rams of his own herds, and flocks, exactly according to the divine ritual, in his preſent impenitent, and ſelf-confident diſpoſition; God would have abhorred them: how much more then, when the animals to be ſacrificed, were ſpared for that purpoſe, in direct diſobedience to the expreſs command of God! What could this have been, but proudly pretending to know what was for the glory of God, better than he himſelf had done? And attempting to bribe him with coſtly oblations, to diſpenſe with the violation of his own commandments?

V. 23. *For rebellion*, &c.] The heinouſneſs of a ſin is not to be judged of by the magnitude of the object, in which it is committed, or the groſſneſs of the outward action; but from the deliberate, and determined diſobedience of the will, from whence it ariſes. When the Lord expreſsly ays "thou ſhalt;" and his rational creature dares, to perſiſt in ſaying, "I will not;" whether the conteſt be about an apple, or a kingdom, it is ſtubbornneſs, and rebellion; a contempt of the commandment, and a daring inſult to the majeſty, and authority of God; and has in it all the eſſential malignity, which, in other circumſtances, conſtitutes idolatry, witchcraft, or the moſt flagrant injuſtice. This is abundantly illuſtrated in the conſequent hiſtory of Saul himſelf.

V. 24. 25. *I have ſinned*, &c.] Saul could no longer deny or entirely excuſe his offence; and therefore he reluctantly confeſſed it: yet in ſuch a manner, as detected an unhumbled, and hypocritical heart. He perſiſted in tranſferring the blame to the people; "for he feared them, and "obeyed their voice:" yet he was not ſo timid, or obedient to them, when his own intereſt, or authority were concerned. He was more diſquieted, becauſe Samuel was offended, leſt he ſhould alienate the people, than becauſe the Lord was angry with him: and he prayed *of him* to pardon him, as if forgiveneſs of ſins had belonged to him; (*Pſal.* c. li. v. 4.)

V. 27, 28.] Saul perſonally cared not for Samuel; but he was ſenſible what influence he poſſeſſed over the people; and he feared, that if he departed in diſpleaſure, he would proceed to anoint another king, and would ſtir up the people to revolt from him, and thus immediately execute the ſentence againſt him: therefore he thus earneſtly oppoſed his departure; and by renting Samuel's mantle,

hath rent the kingdom of Iſrael from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou.

29 And alſo the Strength of Iſrael will not lie, nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he ſhould repent.

30 Then he ſaid, I have ſinned; *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Iſrael, and turn again with me, that I may worſhip the LORD thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worſhipped the LORD.

32 Then ſaid Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites: and Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag ſaid, Surely the bitterneſs of death is paſt.

33 And Samuel ſaid, As thy ſword hath made women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy mother be childleſs among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his houſe to Gibeah of Saul.

35 And Samuel came no more to ſee Saul until the day of his death; nevertheleſs, Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Iſrael.

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afforded a ſignificant token of the kingdom being rent from him, and given to a more worthy perſon; as Samuel by divine inſpiration interpreted it.

V. 29. *The Strength of Iſrael*, &c.] "Or the victory "of Iſrael:" Saul took the honour of the victory, and of Iſrael's protection to himſelf, and raiſed a trophy of it, before he offered thank-offerings to God: but Samuel covertly rebuked his vanity, and reminded him that the Lord, who had irreverſibly condemned him to loſe his kingdom, was Iſrael's ſtrength, and victory.

V. 30. *Honour me now*, &c.] When he ſhould publicly have taken ſhame to himſelf for his ſin, he was anxious for Samuel to honour him before the people, that his example might influence their conduct!

V. 31. *So Samuel*, &c.] Samuel, perhaps by divine direction, changed his mind, that he might not occaſion any inſurrection amongſt the people, and that he might execute the juſtice of God upon Agag: ſo he witneſſed Saul's worſhip, but it doth not appear that he took any part in it.

V. 32. *Delicately*, &c.] That is, affecting the ſtate, and dignity of a monarch, as if he would over-awe the aged prophet: and either he ſpake as one, who deemed himſelf in no danger of death, as he had eſcaped the ſword of a conquering king, and could have nothing to fear from Samuel: or elſe, as one, who had got over the fear of death, and was determined to meet it with intrepidity. He was the chief perſon, who was to have been ſlain, both as to the head of the devoted nation, and for his own crimes: and therefore Samuel hewed him to pieces before the Lord, near his altar, and as a ſacrifice to his juſtice. Thus Samuel, who was of a lenient ſpirit, and prayed all night for Saul, heſitated not to execute that ſentence of God upon this condemned criminal, which Saul, who afterwards proved himſelf very cruel, refuſed to do. After this Samuel withdrew entirely from Saul, as one rejected of God; and though Saul once came to him, he never went to Saul any more.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They are not well qualified to rule over men, who have not learned to obey God; eſpecially to rule over his people. The righteous vengeance of God may be long delayed, but will certainly be executed, according to his moſt tremendous threatnings, upon all impenitent ſinners; but with the moſt marked ſeverity upon the ring-leaders in perſecution, and ſuch, as have endeavoured to hinder thoſe, who were ſetting out in the ways of godlineſs. When the Lord calls us to our work, and his time is come, he will provide us helpers, and give us ſucceſs; but he will at the ſame time make trial of our ſpirits. We may not avenge ourſelves without expreſs command; but we may at any time requite the kindneſs of our benefactors: and they, who do good to God's people for his ſake, treaſure up bleſſings for their poſterity. It is dangerous living amongſt wicked people, and if we would not periſh with them, we muſt keep ſeparate from them. The pride of man's heart can admit the blaſphemous idea of being in ſome caſes more merciful than God, and of cenſuring the threatened puniſhment of ſinners, as too ſevere: and covetouſneſs deems the vile, and refuſe good enough to be ſpent wholly in the ſervice of the Lord: and hypocriſy is detected by partiality in obedience, and paying more honour to wicked great men, than to the commandments of God. Many go far in the external appearance of religion, who go back from following the Lord, and are given up to be hardened, and periſh. Over ſuch perſons faithful miniſters are often conſtrained to grieve, and they pour out many prayers for them, which return into their own boſom. However they muſt, and will deliver the Lord's meſſage, though their hearts be pained by ſo doing: and if ſinners knew their ſecret ſorrow and prayers for them, and conſidered, that they ſpeak no more, than God hath required them to ſay, they would not reſent their moſt faithful reproofs. When men are ſolicitous to perpetuate the memory of their religious ſervices, they ſhew that they only ſought the praiſe of men, and verily they have their poor reward: and when they boaſt of their obedience, and by fair ſpeeches would extort commendation from the ſervants of God, be ſure their conduct will not endure a ſcrutiny. Many obſervable circumſtances betray the hypocriſy of ſome confident profeſſors of godlineſs. If you are true diſciples of Chriſt, what mean theſe evil tempers, this covetouſneſs, this luxury, and pride of life, this conformity to the world, this contempt and neglect of the poor? Was this the mind, and life of Chriſt? Is this the ſcriptural character of a Chriſtian? By ſelf-examination, and circum-

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Samuel ſent to anoint a king of the ſons of Jeſſe, and directed to conceal his buſineſs by a ſacrifice, v. 1—5. 2d. Jeſſe's ſeven elder ſons paſſed by, and David, from the flock, anointed, 6—13. 3d. Saul troubled by an evil ſpirit, and David ſent for, to play on the harp before him, 14—23.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, ſeeing I have rejected him from reigning over Iſrael? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will ſend thee to Jeſſe the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his ſons.

2 And Samuel ſaid, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD ſaid, Take an heifer with thee, and ſay, I am come to ſacrifice to the LORD.

3 And call Jeſſe to the ſacrifice, and I will ſhew thee what thou ſhalt do: and thou ſhalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD ſpake, and came to Beth-lehem: and the elders

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ſpection men ſhould render it unneceſſary for miniſters to preſs home upon their conſciences ſuch convincing queſtions. But the unhumbled heart will never want an excuſe, or palliation of the moſt evident criminality; and it always will be neceſſary, for the preachers of God's word, to drive ſinners from their ſubterfuges; to ſhew them the malignity, and aggravations of their offences; to ſilence their objections, and excuſes, and to urge conviction upon their hearts: though the convincing ſpirit of God alone can render the means effectual to the deſired end. In exerciſing this part of the ſacred miniſtry, nothing is of more importance, than an accurate knowledge of the relative and comparative value of the truths, precepts, and ordinances of religion; about which hypocrites ſo miſtake, and thereby impoſe upon themſelves. An obedient heart is in one way or other eſſential to all religion; and in that of a ſinner implies a willing obedience to the command given to all men to repent; an obedient reliance on the Saviour's merits; an obedient attendance on all inſtituted ordinances, as means of grace; and a willing obedience to the commands of Chriſt, out of love to his name, and to adorn his goſpel. The expreſſion of this temper in the moſt minute concerns, and with much infirmity, and miſtake is accepted of a merciful God: but a proud, ſtubborn, rebellious will renders the moſt ſplendid ſervices, and the moſt ſpecious profeſſion, abominable in the ſight of the Lord, and ranks them with the moſt atrocious crimes. The impenitent ſinner may be detected even in his confeſſions, and concomitant behaviour: he hath always ſome reſerve; he *will* throw the blame off from himſelf; he will ſhew an anxiety about the eſteem of man, and a fear of temporal loſs, ſhame, and ſuffering, more than about the future wrath of an offended God; and will attempt to quiet his conſcience with external forms, and a partial reformation. In vain will ſuch men endeavour to prevail with faithful miniſters, to afford them countenance; and the more they attempt it, the more awful warnings will they receive of approaching ruin: and when the ſervants of God deſpair of doing them good, they will withdraw from them, and leave them to themſelves, whatever their rank in life may be, that they may interpret their ſilence, and abſence into a conſtant reproof. The fear of man is no excuſe for diſobeying God; and yet it often is a mere pretence; for many will plead the fear of man for neglecting ſelf-denying duties, who fear not their diſpleaſure in the gratification of their own paſſions. When the ſentence of final rejection is irreverſibly denounced, repentance will be unavailing: and though our God be now ready to forgive, he will neither repent, nor change his purpoſes of vengeance hereafter; and the *ſtrength of Iſrael* will be eternally engaged to puniſh his ſtouteſt, proudeſt foes. If they, who were regarded, when little in their own eyes, are elated by proſperity, and forget the Lord, he will contemn them: and when one inſtrument is rejected, another ſhall be ſought out more fit for the work. The mighty of the earth are ſo accuſtomed to flattery, and diſtinction, that they can ſcarce ſuppoſe that any will dare to withhold it from them; but with God there is no reſpect of perſons: and, though he requires his ſervants to honour thoſe, who are in authority; yet he teaches them to be of his judgment concerning comparative excellency. Neither dignity, delicacy, or vain confidence, give the ſinner any ſecurity: the bitterneſs of death may meet them when and where they leaſt expect it; but the bitterneſs of future miſery is the moſt to be feared. Our warfare however is of ſomewhat a different nature, than Saul's: But if we therein ſpare one domineering luſt, or profitable iniquity, we ſhall forfeit the promiſed kingdom with deep diſgrace: for our ſincerity muſt be approved by devoting every ſin to utter deſtruction, by the power of God's grace, and for the glory of his name. For this in all ages, and nations, is the line of diſtinction betwixt Samuel, and Saul, betwixt the Chriſtian and the hypocrite; that the one levels his whole force againſt Agag, againſt that luſt, which by conſtitution, and cuſtom, has got the greateſt aſcendancy over him, that he may hew it in pieces before the Lord: whilſt the other is anxious to preſerve his maſter ſin, however willing he may appear to mortify, or refrain from thoſe ſins, to which he hath been leſs addicted.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 2. *How can I go, &c.?*] Saul was now become very ſuſpicious, fierce, and tyrannical, and enraged againſt Samuel for the ſentence, that he had denounced againſt him: This queſtion therefore might not reſult wholly from unbelieving fear, but from a deſire to receive inſtructions, for the more prudent management of the affair: accordingly he was directed to go to Beth-lehem to *ſacrifice*, as he probably did from time to time, in many different places: the anſwer, which he was inſtructed to return, was the truth, and he was not bound to divulge all his intentions.

V. 4. *Trembled, &c.*] They were conſcious, it is likely, of ſome iniquity committed amongſt them, and feared, leſt Samuel was ſent to denounce the wrath of God upon them.

of the town trembled at his coming, and ſaid, Comeſt thou peaceably?

5 And he ſaid, Peaceably: I am come to ſacrifice unto the LORD; ſanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice. And he ſanctified Jeſſe and his ſons and called them to the ſacrifice.

6 And it came to paſs when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and ſaid, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.

7 But the LORD ſaid unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his ſtature; becauſe I have refuſed him: for *the LORD ſeeth* not as man ſeeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jeſſe called Abinadab, and made him paſs before Samuel. And he ſaid, Neither hath the LORD choſen this.

9 Then Jeſſe made Shammah to paſs by. And he ſaid, Neither hath the LORD choſen this.

10 Again, Jeſſe made ſeven of his ſons to paſs before Samuel. And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, The LORD hath not choſen theſe.

11 And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, Are here all *thy* children? And he ſaid, There remaineth yet the youngeſt, and, behold, he keepeth the ſheep. And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, Send and fetch him: for we will not ſit down till he come hither.

12 And he ſent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD ſaid, Ariſe, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midſt of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel roſe up, and went to Ramah.

14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil ſpirit from the LORD troubled him.

15 And Saul's ſervants ſaid unto him, Behold now, an evil ſpirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy ſervants, *which are* before thee, to ſeek out a man *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it ſhall come to paſs, when the evil ſpirit from God is upon thee, that he ſhall play with his hand, and thou ſhalt be well.

V. 5. *He ſanctified*, &c.] He inſtructed them in the nature of this ſacred ordinance, and by his counſels, and prayers aſſiſted them in preparing for acceptably, and profitably attending upon it.

V. 7. *Look not*, &c.] Samuel did not fully underſtand, that the Lord in anger gave Iſrael their firſt king, after *their own heart*, but that he now intended in mercy to give them one after *his own heart*; being chiefly remarkable for his ſtrong faith and fervent piety.

V. 11. *He keepeth*, &c.] David being young, not more than eighteen or twenty years of age, and being of a contemplative diſpoſition, was not thought by Jeſſe to be capable of tranſacting buſineſs of importance, and was not therefore kept at home on this occaſion: ſo different doth the Lord ſee, than man does!—His name ſignifies "Beloved," and he was an eminent type of the beloved Son of God.

V. 13. *An horn*, &c.] The quantity of oil, ſuppoſed to be greater, than had been uſed about Saul, and the durable horn, contraſted with the brittle vial, are ſignificant of David's fuller meaſure of endowments for governing, and of the perpetuity of his kingdom. He was anointed "in the midſt of his brethren," though it was kept ſecret from others, and yet none of them rivalled, oppoſed, or injured him: from that time he was evidently endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, qualifying him for great things; nevertheleſs he returned to his humble and laborious occupation, waiting therein the Lord's time for being called to action.

V. 14. *But the Spirit*, &c.] About the ſame time it became evident that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and that he was deprived of his capacity for public buſineſs, performing nothing prudently, or ſucceſſfully: nay that an evil ſpirit was *judicially* permitted to impel him to the moſt furious ſallies of rage, or jealouſy, to oppreſs his ſpirits to a deep melancholy, and to render him at times diſtracted.

V. 16. *A cunning*, &c.] This might be a proper method of ſoothing his melancholy and calming his paſſions; but the cauſe of his malady lay much deeper. It had been better advice, if his ſervants had perſuaded him to ſend for Samuel to converſe with, and pray for him; for without repentance, and forgiveneſs of ſins, his diſorder could not be cured, though the ſymptoms might be mitigated. The hand of the Lord was manifeſt in thus bringing David to court. After his anointing he had in one way or other ſo ſignalized himſelf, that he was much taken notice of, c. xvii. v. 34—36:) and eſpecially his ſkill in muſic was remarked by ſome perſon, who attended on Saul. Thus he was introduced to him, and his ſolemn ſacred muſic was much more ſuitable to his caſe, than more amuſing ſtrains would have been. He came to Saul with a high character, which he did not diſgrace; he was uſeful to, and beloved by him; and yet, when Saul no longer wanted him, he returned back to his flocks as contented as ever, and was ſoon forgotten at court.

17 And Saul ſaid unto his ſervants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

18 Then anſwered one of the ſervants, and ſaid, Behold, I have ſeen a ſon of Jeſſe the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely perſon, and the LORD *is* with him.

19 Wherefore Saul ſent meſſengers unto Jeſſe, and ſaid, Send me David thy ſon, which *is* with the ſheep.

20 And Jeſſe took an aſs *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and ſent *them* by David his ſon unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and ſtood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer.

22 And Saul ſent to Jeſſe, ſaying, Let David, I pray thee, ſtand before me: for he hath found favour in my ſight.

23 And it came to paſs, when the *evil* ſpirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: ſo Saul was refreſhed, and was well, and the evil ſpirit departed from him.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Philiſtines warring againſt Iſrael, Goliath's challenge, and the people's diſmay, 1—11. *2d. David ſent to the army; hearing and reſenting the reproach of God's people; rebuked by his brother, introduced to Saul, undertaking to fight Goliath, and anſwering Saul's objections,* 12—37. *3d. David's arming for the conflict, Goliath's contempt of him; his believing confidence in God, and glorious victory; with the death of Goliath, and the rout of the Philiſtines,* 38—53. *4th. His return with Goliath's head, and Saul's enquiry concerning him,* 54—58.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our moſt diſintereſted ſorrow may be exceſſive, and imply rebellion againſt the righteous will of God: and he will then rebuke us for, as well as encourage us under, our diſtreſs.—We ought not inconſolably to mourn for thoſe, whom the Lord hath rejected, but ſhould rather rejoice in thoſe, whom he is calling forth to uſefulneſs: and no partial affection ſhould interfere with preſent duty. The moſt eminent believers are not entirely ſuperior to the fear of man, when dangerous ſervices are aſſigned them. But the Lord will inwardly ſtrengthen, and outwardly protect them: and without immediate revelation, he can by his word and Spirit ſhew them ſtep by ſtep what they ought to do. The guilty conſcience trembles at a meſſage from heaven: yet the miniſters of Chriſt all come peaceably, propoſing ſalvation, through the ſacrifice of the Redeemer, and ſpeaking terror to none, except thoſe, who neglect ſo great ſalvation. There is a preparation of heart required for the receiving of this atonement, as well as for attending on divine ordinances; and the inſtruction, converſe, and prayers of faithful miniſters are very uſeful, in both caſes, to thoſe, who deſire to profit by them; and parents ought not needleſsly to permit their children to miſs ſuch favourable opportunities: for through the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and the ordinances of his worſhip, the unction of the holy Spirit is communicated, according to the will of God. It is difficult wholly to diveſt ourſelves of partiality for thoſe, who are recommended by external accompliſhments; and we often frame an erroneous judgment of characters: but the Lord values nothing *comparatively*, but that holy faith, fear, and love, which are implanted in the heart, beyond the reach of human penetration. And He doth not favour our children according to our fond partialities; but often moſt honours, and bleſſes thoſe, who have been leaſt regarded. The Lord's method of educating men for important ſtations of uſefulneſs differ much from thoſe, which human wiſdom hath deviſed. Humble induſtry, and obedient attention to obſcure duties; contemplation, and retired devotion; and a patient ſelf-denying aſſiduity, are the beſt preparatives for ſerving the cauſe of God and his church. When ſinners, by reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt, have provoked his final departure, they are expoſed to every incurſion of ſatan, and are likely to become tormentors of themſelves, and of others: nay ſome may perceive, that they are given up of God, in his righteous diſpleaſure, without taking warning by their awful caſe. Indeed we none of us have the leaſt ſecurity either for our bodies or ſouls, againſt the malignity of evil ſpirits, except in the protection of that God, whom alas! we are continually provoking. When conſcious guilt and fears of divine vengeance diſorder the minds of men, they, who perceive their diſtreſs, but underſtand neither the cauſe, nor the cure, are apt to propoſe very fatal methods of relief: and muſic, diverſion, company, or buſineſs, have *for a ſeaſon* been frequently employed as a ſucceſsful quietus for a wounded conſcience: but nothing can effect a real cure, but the blood of Chriſt, applied in faith, and the ſanctifying Spirit ſealing the pardon, by his holy comforts: and all theſe expedients to diſpel religious melancholy are ſure methods of increaſing diſtreſs, either in this world, or in the next.—Every endowment, which admits of an uſeful exerciſe, in ſubſerviency to godlineſs, is to be aſcribed to the energy of the divine Spirit: and opportunities will be afforded for its being diſplayed; and if the Lord be graciouſly with us, they will be ſuitably improved: and good behaviour in inferior ſtations is the beſt introduction to higher advancement.—Thus Jeſus was obedient unto death, ere he was exalted to his glorious throne: and thus he trains up his people, by obedience, in the midſt of temptation, and trouble, for their future inheritance in the region of purity and felicity.

NOW the Philiſtines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Iſrael were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and ſet the battle in array againſt the Philiſtines.

3 And the Philiſtines ſtood on a mountain on the one ſide, and Iſrael ſtood on a mountain on the other ſide: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philiſtines, named Goliath of Gath, whoſe height *was* ſix cubits and a ſpan.

5 And *he had* an helmet of braſs upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail: and the weight of the coat *was* five thouſand ſhekels of braſs.

6 And *he had* greaves of braſs upon his legs, and a target of braſs between his ſhoulders.

7 And the ſtaff of his ſpear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his ſpear's head *weighed* ſix hundred ſhekels of iron: and one bearing a ſhield went before him.

8 And he ſtood and cried unto the armies of Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Why are ye come out to ſet *your* battle in array? *Am* not I a Philiſtine, and ye ſervants to Saul? chooſe you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your ſervants: but if I prevail againſt him, and kill him, then ſhall ye be our ſervants, and ſerve us.

10 And the Philiſtine ſaid, I defy the armies of Iſrael this day; give me a man that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Iſrael heard thoſe words of the Philiſtine they were diſmayed, and greatly afraid.

12 Now David *was* the ſon of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whoſe name *was* Jeſſe; and he had eight ſons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

13 And the three eldeſt ſons of Jeſſe went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three ſons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firſt born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David *was* the youngeſt: and the three eldeſt followed Saul.

15 But David went, and returned from Saul, to feed his father's ſheep at Beth-lehem.

16 And the Philiſtine drew near morning and evening, and preſented himſelf forty days.

17 And Jeſſe ſaid unto David his ſon, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *Now the Philiſtines*, &c.] Saul had repeatedly allowed the Philiſtines time to recover their ſtrength, and courage: and perhaps the report of the diſordered ſtate of his mind had emboldened them to this invaſion: yet the Lord ſo ordered it, that he was in ſome meaſure recovered, ere the war was begun.

V. 4. *A champion*, &c.] "Or a dueller," one who wiſhed to diſtinguiſh himſelf in ſingle combat, confiding in the greatneſs of his ſtrength. He was of the race of the Anakims, and upon the *moſt moderate computation* was ten feet high; and the weight of his armour ſhews that his bulk, and ſtrength were proportionable. Probably men in general were about the ſame ſize as at preſent; for ſuch giants then cauſed as much ſurpriſe, as they now would. (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 33.)

V. 8, 9. *Then will we be*, &c.] By this propoſal the conſternation of the Iſraelites was increaſed; as if they muſt needs become ſlaves to the Philiſtines, unleſs ſome one of them could overcome their champion: but no nation will ever ſuffer its liberties, and intereſts to be diſpoſed of in ſuch a manner.

V. 11. *They were diſmayed*, &c.] When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he loſt his former courage: or, depending on the God of Iſrael, he might have aſſaulted the army of the Philiſtines, and at once have ſilenced the proud boaſtings of Goliath: but his timidity diſheartened the army; for faith, and piety were evidently at a low ebb amongſt them. Nor had Jonathan the ſame inward intimation to engage in this ſervice, that he formerly had to undertake one, at leaſt equally perilous; for the Lord had reſerved it for David.

V. 12. *Went among men*, &c.] Being far advanced in years he was exempted from war; but he ſent three of his ſons with Saul.

V. 15. *But David went*, &c.] Saul's diſorder being relieved, and his mind engaged in public buſineſs, David's muſic was not wanted, and therefore he very contentedly returned to his former laborious, and obſcure occupation: Probably he had only *nominally* been appointed Saul's armour-bearer, and had not been employed in actual ſervice.

corn,

corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him: and he came to the trench as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name) out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

30 And he turned from him towards another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul; and he sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's

V. 18. *Take their pledge.*] Some concerted token of their welfare, as was customary, whilst epistolary correspondence was infrequent.

V. 19. *Fighting with*, &c.] They seem to have had frequent skirmishes, though it came not to a general engagement.

V. 22. *His carriage*, &c.] That, which he had brought for his brethren, and their captain.

V. 25, 26.] It does not appear that Saul consulted the Lord, or offered sacrifice, or even made supplications, on this occasion; but he employed mere carnal policy. To this conduct, David's speech, glowing with confidence in God, zeal for his glory, and resentment of Israel's disgrace, formed a noble contrast. However terrible the gigantic Goliath might appear, he was an uncircumcised Philistine; and those whom he defied, were not merely "the servants of "Saul," (v. 8,) but "the armies of the living God." And in this view, who, or what was he, that any true Israelite should fear him? The very enquiry implied the most pointed reproof of the unbelief, and cowardice of Saul, and of the whole army.

V. 28. *Eliab's anger*, &c.] Eliab was acquainted with David's anointing, and understood at least, that it was an indication of his future superiority; and he was doubtless moved by envy on this occasion: he also considered the spirit of his younger neglected brother as a tacit reproach of his own timidity. He therefore falsely accused him of leaving his flock without a keeper, and of coming without being sent, out of curiosity, or ambition; and intimated that he was notoriously of a proud, aspiring wicked disposition: by these insinuations he meant both to discourage David, and to prejudice the hearers, that he might be disregarded.

V. 29. *Is there not a cause?*] This answer was as admirable for the meekness of wisdom, as the former question was for the courage of faith. David took no notice of the reproach cast upon his character; or of the false reason assigned for his coming into the army: it was no time to enter into such altercations. But, says he, "what have I "now done? Is there not a cause?" Should not every Israelite feel a holy indignation to hear an uncircumcised Philistine defy the armies of the living God? And ought not some Israelite to step forward and venture his life, to wipe away this reproach?

heart

heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock;

35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip, and his sling *was* in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

V. 34—37. *A lion and a bear*, &c.] In defence of his flock David had been enabled at different times, to slay a lion and a bear; and he looked upon this as an earnest of victory over this uncircumcised Philistine, whom he meant to attack, out of zeal for the glory of God, and the interests of Israel. Goliath was in himself no more terrible to any Israelitish soldier, than a lion, or a bear, bereaved of their prey, would be to an unarmed shepherd; his deliverance from them was of the Lord, who would also deliver him from the Philistine. Thus when the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samson, he rent the lion, before he destroyed the Philistines.

V. 38—40.] David not being accustomed to such armour, as Saul put upon him, was not satisfied to go in that manner: but this was from the Lord, that it might more evidently appear, that he fought and conquered in faith; and that the victory was from him, who works by the feeblest, and most despised means, and instruments.

V. 42—44. *A youth*, &c.] Perhaps David might at this time be twenty-two, or twenty-three years of age; but his unwarlike appearance excited contempt and disdain in Goliath's breast; and he was affronted to be opposed by such a stripling, accoutred in such a manner. But though he cursed him by his gods, he evidently trusted not in them, but in the might of his own arm.

V. 45—47.] Nothing can exceed the humility, the faith, the piety and the zeal for the glory of God, and the cause of Israel, and of true religion, which glow in this most beautiful speech. David therein expressed with peculiar animation his assured expectation of success; he gloried in his own contemptible appearance and armature, that the victory might the more unquestionably be ascribed to the Lord: and he anticipated the effects of this transaction; he even conceived a hope that it might produce a salutary conviction in the minds of the Philistines, that the God of Israel was the only true God: and he predicted that his power and glory would by means thereof be made known to all the earth.

48 And

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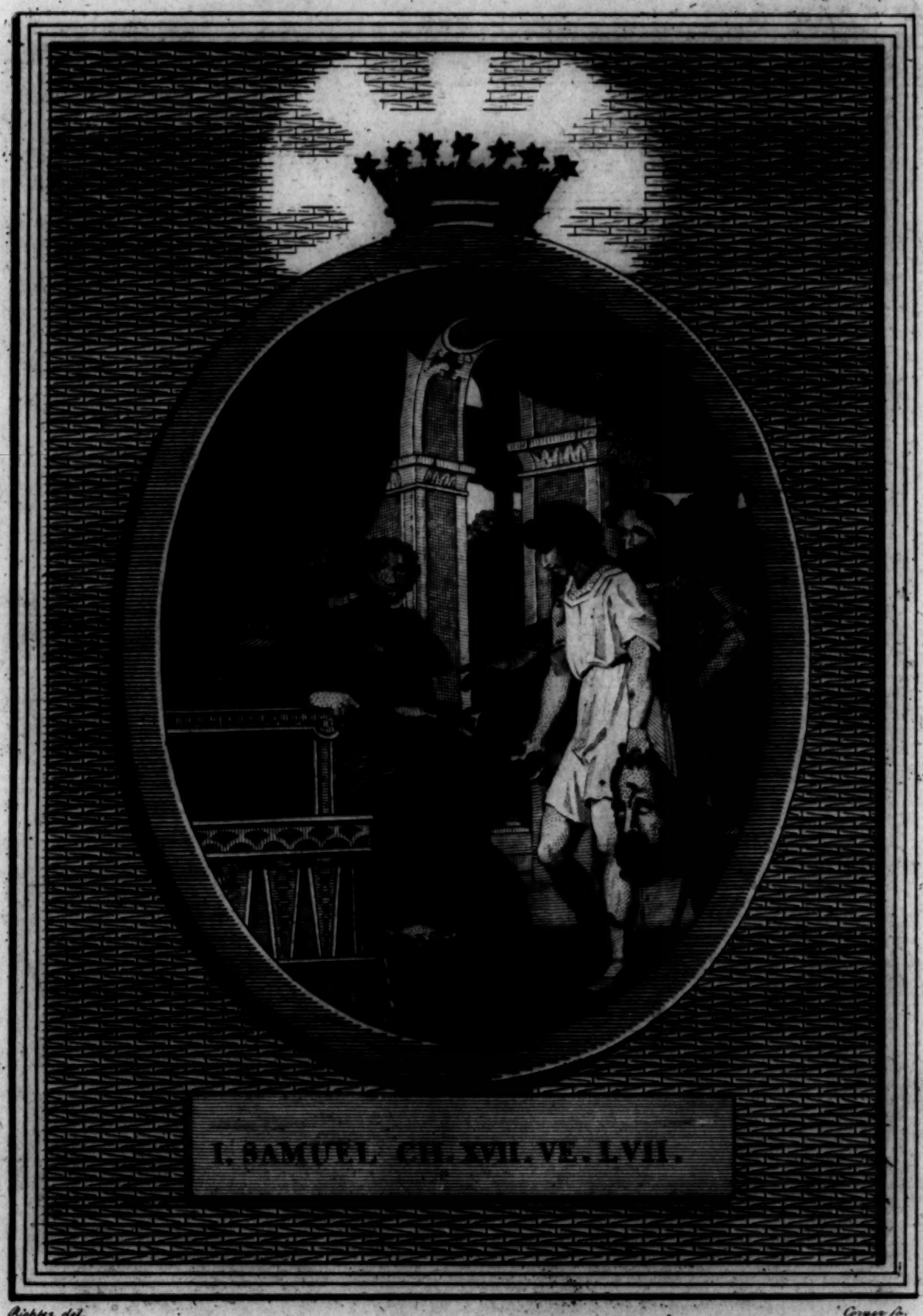

1. SAMUEL. CH. XVII. VE. LVII.

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48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron: and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem: but he put his armour in his tent.

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As* thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56 And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling *is*.

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58 And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

V. 49. *The stone sunk*, &c.] Either Goliah in fearless presumption had neglected to fasten on his helmet; or the stone, directed, and impelled by the power of the Almighty, penetrated both the helmet and his skull, as a stone sinks into the water.

V. 51. *They fled.*] Perceiving so evident a proof of the power, and presence of the God of Israel, they had not courage to stand their ground after their champion's death, but yielded Israel a complete victory.

V. 54. *To Jerusalem*, &c.] Either David carried the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, as a terror to the Jebusites, and put his armour in his own tent, until it was removed to the tabernacle of God (c. xxi. v. 8—9.) Or this is spoken by anticipation; and means, that afterwards Goliath's skull was preserved in Jerusalem, and his armour in that tent, which David there formed for the ark; as a monument of the victory to the glory of God.

V. 55. *Whose son*, &c.] The disordered state of Saul's mind, the multiplicity of his affairs, the intervening time, and a variety of new objects might combine to occasion his forgetfulness of David; who before had been useful to, and favoured by him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When they, to whom it belongs *officially* to defend the cause of God, and his church, are destitute of his Spirit; and are given up to ambition, covetousness, envy, malice, or lust; no wonder if open enemies are encouraged, and friends dispirited: and as the fear of God declines, the fear of man, in one form or other, will gather strength. But when one instrument is thrown aside, another shall be prepared, and produced for the work of the Lord: for though Israel be cast down, and his enemies for a season triumph, yet shall he be raised up again, and *their* success shall terminate in deeper disgrace, and ruin. Every gift of God to man, instead of inspiring gratitude, naturally increases his proud self-admiration, and confidence, and his disposition to despise, and insult over others. But what are human wisdom, strength, or courage, unless preserved by him, that gave them? When they are withdrawn from their dependance on him, or employed in rebellion against him; the haughty possessor becomes more expressly the enemy, and rival of the Almighty, and is prepared for a more distinguished monument of his righteous vengeance. Degenerate professors often receive just rebukes from the mouths of the most decided enemies of true religion: nor need either persecutor, or heresiarch fear defying the disciples of man, any more than Goliath feared defying the servants of Saul; *were they only such*, as their names, and conduct on some occasions seem to imply. For in human accomplishments the opposers of the truth of God have frequently possessed an undisputed superiority: confiding therein they have defied, and still do defy the advocates of scriptural truth, to engage with them, and seem to dream of a total and decided victory. But they have the armies of the living God, and their invincible Captain himself, to contend with; and who are these uncircumcised Philistines, that a true Israelite should be afraid of them? Any believer in the divine Saviour may predict that their triumphing will be short: and, if fairly called to it, we need not fear to go forth with the despised sling and stone, with plain testimonies of holy Scripture, unadorned by eloquence, and unsupported by human learning, against the most formidable of them: trusting in him, who hath all

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1*st. Saul retaining David; and Jonathan's love for, and covenant with him,* 1—4. 2*d. David's ſucceſs, and reputation; Saul's envy, and attempt to murder him; David's wiſdom, the people's favour to, and Saul's fear of him,* 5—16. 3*d. Saul's malice and treachery about giving him one of his daughters to wife; David's humility, and good conduct; his marriage to Michal, and his increaſing reputation,* 17—30.

AND it came to paſs, when he had made an end of ſpeaking unto Saul, that the ſoul of Jonathan was knit with the ſoul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own ſoul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's houſe.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, becauſe he loved him as his own ſoul.

4 And Jonathan ſtripped himſelf of the robe

power in heaven and earth engaged in ſupport of his cauſe, and truth. But they, who would ſerve God, muſt learn patience, meekneſs, and ſelf-denial; to bear neglect, contempt, and ingratitude; to be laborious, faithful, and obedient; to ſhun obſervation, and oſtentation; to walk by faith, and to wait the Lord's time for every promiſed, or expected mercy; and not to put themſelves forward, till it be undeniably evident, that there is a cauſe. In times of general formality, and lukewarmneſs, every degree of zeal, which implies a readineſs to go further, or to venture more in the cauſe of God, than others do, will be cenſured as pride, and ambition, &c: and by none more, than near relations, and negligent ſuperiors. Such cenſures will ſeldom be unmingled with unjuſt inſinuations, and attempts to blacken a man's character; in order to excite prejudice againſt him, and to render his efforts unſucceſsful. But conſcious integrity, and confidence in God, united with meekneſs, wiſdom, and perſeverance, will carry a man through, and raiſe him above ſuch diſcouraging oppoſition: and they, who would do good, ſhould not multiply words in defence of their own characters, ſhould avoid whatever may needleſsly exaſperate, prolong contention, or foment envy; and be ſatisfied with appealing to the conſcience, and common ſenſe of impartial perſons, that times, and circumſtances require ſuch exertions. The hope of being an inſtrument of good, and of being accepted by the Lord will animate the true believer in every undertaking; and the expectation of a reward from man, or the fear of human cenſure will be with him inferior conſiderations. The due improvement of our experience of the Lord's faithfulneſs, love, and power in former ſeaſons of danger, and difficulty, will inſpire confidence in the proſpect of future conflicts; and on ſome occaſions may be referred to for the ſatisfaction of others: and to be engaged againſt the acknowledged enemies of God, and his church, is in all caſes a proper ground of encouragement. In the ſervice of our common Lord we are not all qualified to handle the ſame weapons, or to fill up the ſame ſtations: none ſhould therefore be ſet up in all things as models, nor ought any of us *indiſcriminately* to imitate the moſt approved characters. Rules, and method, which are uſeful, and natural to one man, are encumbrances to another: and we all do beſt when we cultivate our own peculiar talent, taking hints from every body, and not attempting exact conformity to any one. But faith, and prayer, and truth, and righteouſneſs, the whole armour of God; and the mind, that was in Chriſt, are equally needful for all the ſervants of the Lord, whatever be their particular work, or method of doing it. The curſes of wicked men are no more to be feared, than their power; they will at length rebound upon themſelves, and proud ſelf-confidence will ſurely be confounded. But they, who truſt in the Lord, and ſimply ſeek his glory, ſhall never be aſhamed: in their hands the feebleſt means ſhall be ſucceſsful, and before them the moſt formidable oppoſition ſhall come to nothing: and the event of every conflict of the church of God againſt her enemies, ſhall evince, "that the Lord ſaveth not with "ſword, and ſpear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he "will give it into our hands:" and this ſhall tend to make known his glory throughout the earth. But human favour is of ſmall value, when men ſo ſoon forget thoſe, who have been moſt uſeful to them: they alone are happy, who enjoy *his* favour, who never forgets, or forſakes the meaneſt of his true people. Finally in David's conflict with, and victory over the champion of the Philiſtines, we may ſee a faint ſhadow of the Redeemer's victory over ſatan, who for ages had defied the armies of the living God, and from the fall of Adam, to his coming, found no one able in his own ſtrength to ſtand againſt him: but Jeſus overcame him upon his own ground, and foiled him with his own weapons; and ſtill goes on by his deſpiſed goſpel to purſue the victory; whilſt all the hoſts of the true Iſrael join in, and ſhare the benefits of his conqueſts, and ſhall ere long meet in heaven to celebrate his triumphs with everlaſting ſongs of praiſe.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *Was knit*, &c.] The modeſty, piety, and faith of David were ſo congenial to the diſpoſition of Jonathan, that they attracted his moſt cordial eſteem, and affection: ſo that they continued thenceforth united in the moſt endeared friendſhip, notwithſtanding Saul's envy, and malice, and Jonathan's knowledge that David was anointed to be king, to *his* excluſion. Their friendſhip was the effect of that grace of God, which produces in all true believers "one heart, and ſoul," forms them of the ſame judgment and diſpoſition, and cauſes them to delight in each other's converſe, and comfort.

V. 2. *And Saul took*, &c] Saul did not at firſt know David, but he ſoon recollected him: heretofore he had frequently returned from Saul to his paſtoral employments, but from this time he returned no more to them.

V. 3, 4.] Jonathan, by ſtripping off his own clothes, and armour, and giving them to David, intended to ratify the covenant betwixt them, as well as to teſtify his affection, and equip him according to his character, and ſtation: David then put off the ſhepherd, and put on the courtier, and ſoldier. Thus the Son of God laid aſide for a ſeaſon

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that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his ſword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

5 And David went out whitherſoever Saul ſent him, *and* behaved himſelf wiſely: and Saul ſet him over the men of war; and he was accepted in the ſight of all the people, and alſo in the ſight of Saul's ſervants.

6 And it came to paſs, as they came, when David was returned from the ſlaughter of the Philiſtine, that the women came out of all the cities of Iſrael, ſinging and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with inſtruments of muſick.

7 And the women anſwered *one another* as they played, and ſaid, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the ſaying diſpleaſed him; and he ſaid, They have aſcribed unto David ten thouſands and to me they have aſcribed *but* thouſands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that the evil ſpirit from God came upon Saul, and he propheſied in the midſt of the houſe; and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul caſt the javelin; for he ſaid, I will ſmite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his preſence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, becauſe the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thouſand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himſelf wiſely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul ſaw that he behaved himſelf very wiſely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Iſrael and Judah loved David, becauſe he went out and came in before them.

17 And Saul ſaid to David, Behold, my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles: for Saul ſaid, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philiſtines be upon him.

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his robes of Divine majeſty, to appear in the mean attire of a ſervant; that he might clothe us in his robes of righteouſneſs, ſalvation, and glory, according to the tenor of the everlaſting covenant, to which he invites ſinners to accede.

V. 6—9.] Some time after the death of Goliath, and the conſequent rout of the Philiſtines, Saul, and perhaps David with him, went to ſeveral of the cities of Iſrael: and wherever they came, the women, according to the cuſtom of the times, went forth to meet them with inſtruments of muſic, and ſinging an ode, that had been compoſed on the occaſion. In this no injuſtice was done, nor any affront offered to Saul: yet the wording of it was very imprudent, and might have given umbrage to a mind leſs propenſe to envy, and ſuſpicion, than Saul's was. Accordingly he was greatly diſpleaſed; and perceiving how David increaſed, whilſt he decreaſed, in popularity, he concluded that God was about "to rend the kingdom from him, and "to give it to a neighbour of his, who was better than he:" perhaps he was alſo informed that Samuel had anointed David, and favoured his intereſt. So that he began to look upon him with a jealous, and malignant eye.

V. 10. *That the evil ſpirit*, &c.] When Saul indulged malevolence he "gave place to the devil." and provoked the Lord to permit the evil ſpirit again to trouble him. Being under a ſupernatural influence, he behaved in ſome reſpects, as the prophets did, when the Spirit of inſpiration came upon them; but from a contrary cauſe: but whether he *aſſumed* this appearance to cloke his attempt of murdering David; or whether ſatan wrought upon him till he was thus carried away, is not certain: however he was influenced by deliberate malice when he threw the javelin at David, and fully intended to have murdered him. Perhaps David, though conſcious of his innocence, and ſatisfied that he was doing his duty, and under God's protection, he would not leave his place, yet ſuſpected ſome miſchief from the javelin in Saul's hand, and thus was enabled to avoid the blow. But whether the javelin was thrown twice ſucceſſively at this time; or once now, and once on another occaſion, doth not certainly appear: David however, being providentially preſerved, expreſſed no reſentment, though probably he became more circumſpect.

V. 12—16.] Saul was conſcious that the Lord was departed from him, and that his former capacity for public buſineſs was withdrawn: and he perceived that the Lord had given David peculiar wiſdom, and was with him to proſper all his undertakings; and this increaſed the diſquietude of his malevolent mind, and his fear of David, as a prevailing rival. Under pretence of advancing him, he therefore removed him from his preſence, which ſerved to ingratiate him with the people, by affording him the opportunity of leading them forth to victory over their enemies.

V. 17. *Let not mine hand*, &c.] Saul appears to have been influenced in this determination by the fear of exciting a revolt among the people, rather than by the fear of God,

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18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

19 But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

20 And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law in *the one of* the twain.

22 And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law: and the days were not expired.

27 Wherefore David arose, and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

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or any reluctance to so horrible a crime. He was engaged by promise to give his daughter to David; but he had delayed, and David was willing to dispense with the engagement. However malice at length prompted him to propose it to David, that he might excite him to venture his life more freely, in order to be accounted worthy of such an honour: but when his design proved abortive, he affronted him in the grossest manner, by giving his daughter to another man: yet David expressed no resentment!

V. 23—26.] David would doubtless suspect some invidious design in this proposal also; but he cautiously avoided mentioning the slight, which had been put upon him; and waved the matter upon the ground of his own poverty, and inferiority; (though his original was not much inferior to Saul's.) But when, instead of dowry, according to the custom of those times, an hundred foreskins of the Philistines were required, he would not seem backward to any perilous service; and therefore in the short time allowed him, he went forth, and returned with twice as many, as were prescribed.

V. 28—30.] Michal's affection for David, his prudent conduct in another incursion of the Philistines, and his increasing reputation, appeared to Saul's distempered mind to forebode David's advancement to, and his own expulsion from the kingdom.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True religion teacheth us to rejoice in, and to love real excellency, though it rival and eclipse our own reputation: and to delight in the society of those, whom the Lord loves, and honours, who bear his image, and are zealous for his glory, without respect to inferiority of station, or selfish considerations. This is that union of souls resulting from participation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which prepares men for filling up their several stations in the church of God, in harmony, sympathy, and love, as the several members do in the natural body: and which being perfected in heaven, will for ever exclude envy, and discontent, and render the felicity of each favoured inhabitant an accession to the joy of all the rest. But how different is the nature of fallen man! When the Lord is provoked to leave us, and satan is permitted to foment our natural evil propensities, we become capable of envying and hating those especially, who are most amiable, and have done the most to serve us, and with malignity proportioned to their meekness and wisdom: the commendation bestowed upon them will be considered as an injury, and reproach to us; and even the peculiar favour of God for them will enhance malice, and incite to revenge; (*Gen.* c. iv. v. 4—8.) Thus men imitate and gratify satan's malevolence; whilst themselves are tortured with continued terrors

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. Saul ordering David to be slain; Jonathan pleading for him, and Saul swearing not to hurt him, v. 1—7. 2d. David victorious over the Philistines; Saul aiming to kill him with a javelin, and besetting his house to take him; his preservation by Michal's assistance, and his flight to Samuel, v. 8—18. 3d. Saul and his messengers, seized with the spirit of prophecy, and prevented from taking David, v. 19—24.

AND Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2 But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee. Now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see that I will tell thee.

4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good.

5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As* the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things: and Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

8 And there was war again: and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter: and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul as he sat in his house with his ja-

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and suspicions, and exposed to temptations to every horrid crime, whereby they bring upon themselves swift destruction. If we would not be given up to such dreadful excesses, let us watch, and pray against the first risings of these dire passions. On the other hand we must be prepared for the effects of them, as they prevail in the minds of others: for every great, and good work a man must expect to be envied of his neighbour: no distinction, or preeminence can be so unexceptionably obtained, or possessed, but it will expose a man to slander, and malice, and perhaps to their most treacherous, and fatal consequences. But such trials are very useful to those, who love God; they serve as a counterpoise to their honour, and commendation, and to check the growth of pride, and attachment to the world: they exercise them to faith, patience, meekness, and communion with God: they give them a fair opportunity of exemplifying the amiable nature, and tendency of true godliness, by acting with wisdom, and propriety in such difficult circumstances: they give them increasing experience of the Lord's faithfulness, in restraining their enemies, raising them up friends, and affording them his gracious protection: and they both prepare them for, and open their way to those stations, in which they are to be employed; for modest merit will shine forth with double lustre in due time. But humility, industry, faithfulness, silence under injuries, and a backwardness to seek great things for ourselves, are requisite to safety, and comfort in public scenes of life; and retired stations are vastly more favourable to our own inward peace. Nay our lavish commendations of those, whom we love and admire, in such a world as this, often proves a real injury: and in all cases every thing should be avoided which can excite envy, or opposition, except the performance of our duty to God and man. But if the Lord be with us, and we have the consolations of his Spirit, we shall be happy in any situation: committing our souls, and bodies, our characters, and interests, our families, and connexions, our way, and our work into his Almighty hand: he will bring all that to pass, which is good for us; and carry us safe through to that blessed world, where treachery, envy, and malice find no admission, but perfect love will prevail for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 3. *Where thou art*, &c.] Some spot, where Saul commonly walked, was pitched upon, that David being there concealed, might have the fullest evidence of Jonathan's fidelity and affection; and all the information, which he could procure him.

V. 6. *And Saul sware*, &c.] Saul was for the present impressed by Jonathan's calm, and forcible arguments; and sware that David should not be slain, probably meaning sincerely: but his convictions wore off, and his malice revived, and he was too much accustomed to swear, duly to reverence an oath.

V. 7—9. *And he was*, &c.] David did not much confide in Saul's assurances; but he was willing to keep in the way of his duty, and to put his trust in God. Though his valour, and success were the known causes of Saul's enmity; yet he was willing to fight against the Philistines, and to expose himself to their swords, and to Saul's in-

velin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand.

10 And Saul ſought to ſmite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he ſlipped away out of Saul's preſence, and he ſmote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and eſcaped that night.

11 Saul alſo ſent meſſengers unto David's houſe to watch him, and to ſlay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, ſaying, If thou ſave not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou ſhalt be ſlain.

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and eſcaped.

13 And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats *hair* for his bolſter, and covered *it* with a cloth.

14 And when Saul ſent meſſengers to take David, ſhe ſaid, He *is* ſick.

15 And Saul ſent the meſſengers *again* to ſee David, ſaying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may ſlay him.

16 And when the meſſengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats *hair* for his bolſter.

17 And Saul ſaid unto Michal, Why haſt thou deceived me ſo, and ſent away mine enemy, that he is eſcaped? And Michal anſwered Saul, He ſaid unto me, Let me go; why ſhould I kill thee?

18 So David fled, and eſcaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him: and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19 And it was told Saul, ſaying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah.

20 And Saul ſent meſſengers to take David: and when they ſaw the company of the prophets propheſying, and Samuel ſtanding *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the meſſengers of Saul, and they alſo propheſied.

21 And when it was told Saul, he ſent other meſſengers, and they propheſied likewiſe. And Saul ſent meſſengers again the third time, and they propheſied alſo.

22 Then went he alſo to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he aſked, and ſaid, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* ſaid, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him alſo, and he went on and propheſied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24 And he ſtripped off his clothes alſo, and propheſied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore they ſay, *Is* Saul alſo among the the prophets?

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creaſed envy on that account: nor did he decline playing upon the harp before him, though he ſaw the javelin in his hand, and had before ſo narrowly eſcaped!

V. 11. *In the morning*, &c.] Leſt David ſhould eſcape, if they entered in the night, the meſſengers were employed to watch till the morning, that he went not out of his houſe; and were then ordered to go, to apprehend, and bring him to Saul that he might ſlay him. By this means an opportunity was afforded David of eſcaping. On this occaſion he penned the fifty-ninth Pſalm.

V. 11—17.] Michal's fidelity to her huſband was commendable: if the caſe had been more doubtful, it would have been her duty to ſide with him againſt her father, whilſt no harm was intended him; but David only aimed to preſerve his life from the unjuſt, and ungrateful malice of Saul. Her ſtratagem to gain time, till David was got to a diſtance, was allowable: but her direct falſhood had not even the plea of neceſſity to excuſe it; (*Note, Joſh.* c. ii. v. 4:) and her anſwer was injurious to David's reputation, and manifeſts that notwithſtanding her affection for him, ſhe was not influenced by the ſame Spirit of piety, which had dictated Jonathan's language to Saul. (ver. 4, 5, 6.) The whole account illuſtrates the ſavage cruelty of Saul, and the extreme danger, to which David's life was expoſed.

V. 18. *To Samuel*, &c.] As the aged prophet had anointed him to be king, he fled to him on this emergency, rather than to his father's houſe; that he might have the ſolace of his counſel, inſtructions, and prayers. Naioth is ſuppoſed to have been the place of the ſeminary of prophets, near Ramah.

V. 23, 24.] Saul being ſeized by the prophetic Spirit before he came to Naioh, ſtripped off his armour, and royal robes, or upper garments; (2 *Sam.* c. vi. v. 14: 20;) and in an extaſy, during the whole day and night, involuntarily joined in ſpeaking of divine things, or in ſinging hymns of praiſe, without any power of executing tne baſe purpoſe of his journey. After which, finding himſelf baffled, he probably returned home extremely chagrined, without taking any notice of Samuel. This ſecond time of Saul being among the prophets was noted, as more wonderful than the former. (c. x. v. 11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt vehement anger, when excited by ſuppoſed injuries may be pacified by conceſſions, kindneſs, and con-

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Contains 1st. David conferring with Jonathan, receiving assurances of fidelity, forming a scheme of ascertaining Saul's intentions, and solemnly ratifying the covenant of friendship, 1—23. *2d. Saul's rage, abuse, and attempt to kill Jonathan for favouring David,* 24—34. *3d. Jonathan shewing David his danger, and their pathetic parting,* 35—42.

AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not *so*.

3 And David sware moreover, and said: Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me, that he might run to Beth-lehem his city; for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth,

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tinued respectful, and good behaviour: but envious rage is fomented by excellency of character, and conduct, and is far more dreadful; (*Prov.* c. xxvii. v. 4.) When rooted malice possesses the heart, murder is speedily conceived; and the prospect of impunity emboldens men to avow the most shameful purposes. Princes are so seldom opposed in their designs; and so few will venture to plead for the objects of their envy, and hatred; that they sometimes conclude all men to be alike selfish, and ready to execute any lucrative schemes of villainy. But that friendship, which is cemented by mutual faith, and piety, will influence those, who feel it's sacred flame, to renounce their highest temporal interests, and venture the displeasure of their superiors, in pleading the cause of injured worth. The evil of causeless malice, of ingratitude, and of persecuting those, whose conduct has been irreproachable, and whose services have been eminent, is so manifest, that a plain statement of truth, and fact, with meek, and serious expostulations, will in such a case often for the time impress their minds, who are most deeply guilty. But resolutions made in consequence of hasty convictions, and without any inward change of disposition, or dependance on the grace of God, seldom produce much good effect: and ungovernable passions easily break through the most solemn oaths, when the fear of God doth not possess the heart. A fresh temptation soon rouses the dormant corruption: and when men indulge malignant passions, they give satan his full advantage, and may be answerable for multiplied murders, without actually perpetating one. The Lord's servants must keep to their place, and duty, though hated for so doing: they must give honour to their earthly superiors, however *they* behave; and persevere in their endeavours to overcome evil with good. The Lord hath innumerable methods of protecting them in the most imminent dangers: he can preserve them by the kindness of those persons, whose misconduct deserves the most marked disapprobation: he can change the hearts, or tye the hands of their enemies, or shame them for a season out of their malicious purposes. Many a persecutor, by coming amongst God's people, have been seized upon by converting grace, and, like Saul of Tarsus, have professed, and preached the faith, that once they sought to destroy. And many, like King Saul, have for a time been apparently changed, have exercised spiritual gifts, and been numbered among the prophets, whose malice has remained unsubdued, and whose last state hath been worse than the first. Let us then daily seek for renewing grace, which shall be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life: let us cleave to truth, and holiness with full purpose of heart; and in every danger and trouble seek protection, comfort, and direction, in the ordinances of God, and in the society of his ministers and people: these things will do more to make us happy, than all the splendour, and luxury of a court.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] XX. 2. *It is not so.*] Probably whilst Saul was detained at Naioh, David hastily repaired to Jonathan, to confer with him upon the state of his affairs: who was willing to attribute his father's attempts against David to his distemper, or to sudden sallies of passion. After Saul had sworn not to slay David, he had said no more to Jonathan on that subject, though he confided all his other affairs to him; and therefore he could not believe that he had a fixed intention of murdering him.

V. 3. *David sware*, &c.] He solemnly called God to witness that in criminating Saul, he went not upon doubtful surmises: and that it was as certain in itself, as that the Lord liveth; and to him, as Jonathan could be of his own existence, that a design was formed against his life, which constrained him to renounce Saul's service, and consult his own safety.

V. 5—7.] David suggested this expedient to convince Jonathan of Saul's intentions, and to shew that he was *then*

then be ſure that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou ſhalt deal kindly with thy ſervant; for thou haſt brought thy ſervant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithſtanding, if there be in me iniquity, ſlay me thyſelf; for why ſhouldeſt thou bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan ſaid, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then ſaid David to Jonathan, Who ſhall tell me? or what *if* thy father anſwer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan ſaid unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan ſaid unto David, O LORD God of Iſrael, when I have ſounded my father about to-morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* any good toward David, and I then ſend not unto thee, and ſhew it thee;

13 The LORD do ſo, and much more to Jonathan: but if it pleaſe my father *to do* thee evil, then I will ſhew it thee, and ſend thee away, that thou mayeſt go in peace; and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou ſhalt not only, while yet I live, ſhew me the kindneſs of the LORD, that I die not;

15 But *alſo* thou ſhalt not cut off thy kindneſs from my houſe for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the houſe of David, *ſaying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan cauſed David to ſwear again, becauſe he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own ſoul.

18 Then Jonathan ſaid to David, To-morrow *is* the new moon; and thou ſhalt be miſſed, becauſe thy ſeat will be empty.

19 And *when* thou haſt ſtayed three days, *then* thou ſhalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didſt hide thyſelf when the buſineſs was *in hand*, and ſhalt remain by the ſtone Ezel.

20 And I will ſhoot three arrows on the ſide *thereof*, as though I ſhot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will ſend a lad, *ſaying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expreſsly ſay

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forced into the meaſures, which he afterwards adopted. Saul ſtill regarded the externals of religion, and at the new moons entertained his family, and chief officers at a feaſt upon a ſacrifice. Hitherto David had filled his place there; but on this occaſion he purpoſed to be abſent, to make trial of Saul: for as he was evidently deſtitute of affection for him, if he were very angry, it muſt ariſe from being deprived of an opportunity to do him miſchief. David was probably invited to a family ſacrifice at Bethlehem; the excuſe was ſufficient; and Saul being out of the way, Jonathan was competent to allow his abſence: and he engaged to return on the third day before even, and to lie concealed in an appointed place, to be informed of the reſult.

V. 8. *A covenant of the Lord*, &c.] That is a covenant ratified in the faith, fear, and love of God, for their mutual encouragement in worſhipping him, and promoting his glory. David ſeems to have conceived ſome jealouſy, leſt Jonathan ſhould warp from his conſtancy: eſpecially leſt the envenomed tongue of ſlander ſhould injure him in his friend's eſteem. "But," ſays he, "if I am guilty of "any great offence, that violates our covenant, ſlay me "thyſelf, but betray me not to thy father." This was finely conceived to touch the tendereſt feelings of the heart of Jonathan.

V. 12, 13.] In ſpeaking to David, Jonathan appealed to the Lord for his ſincerity, and called on him to avenge his perfidy, if he betrayed his friend. It appears that Jonathan knew that Samuel had anointed David, and believed that he would certainly be king: and he had no thoughts of oppoſing the Lord's purpoſe, but rejoiced that ſo pious, and able a perſon was choſen to reign over God's people; and prayed that the Lord might be with him, as he had been with Saul: for, as became a dutiful ſon, he drew a veil over his fathers miſconduct, and only adverted to his former good management and ſucceſs.

V. 14, 15.] It hath been too common in diſputed ſucceſſions for the reigning prince to clear his children's title, by cutting off all competitors: Jonathan therefore prudently propoſed to extend the covenant to their poſterity alſo. He readily renounced all pretenſions to the kingdom, and only deſired that he, and his poſterity might be numbered amongſt David's friends, when all his enemies were deſtroyed. When we conſider David's diſtreſs, Saul's enmity, and Jonathan's proſpects, we can never ſufficiently admire the ſtrength of his faith, and the force of his diſintereſted love! It is obſervable that Jonathan did not deſire that the Lord ſhould require it of David or his poſterity, if any failure took place, "but of the hand of David's "enemies."

unto

BRITISH
29 AP 92
MUSEUM

Taylor delet et Sculp.

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unto the lad, Behold the arrows *are* on this ſide of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt, *as* the LORD liveth.

22 But if I ſay thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath ſent thee away.

23 And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have ſpoken of, behold the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

24 So David hid himſelf in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king ſat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king ſat upon his ſeat, as at other times, *even* upon a ſeat by the wall: and Jonathan aroſe, and Abner ſat by Saul's ſide, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheleſs Saul ſpake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; ſurely he *is* not clean.

27 And it came to paſs on the morrow, *which was* the ſecond *day* of the month, that David's place was empty; and Saul ſaid unto Jonathan his ſon, Wherefore cometh not the ſon of Jeſſe to meat, neither yeſterday nor to-day?

28 And Jonathan anſwered Saul, David earneſtly aſked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem:

29 And he ſaid, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a ſacrifice in the city, and my brother he hath commanded me *to be there*; and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and ſee my brethren: therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled againſt Jonathan, and he ſaid unto him, Thou ſon of the perverſe rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou haſt choſen the ſon of Jeſſe to thine own confuſion, and unto the confuſion of thy mother's nakedneſs?

31 For as long as the ſon of Jeſſe liveth upon the ground, thou ſhalt not be eſtabliſhed, nor thy kingdom: wherefore now ſend and fetch him unto me, for he ſhall ſurely die.

32 And Jonathan anſwered Saul his father, and ſaid unto him, Wherefore ſhall he be ſlain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul caſt a javelin at him to ſmite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to ſlay David.

34 So Jonathan aroſe from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the ſecond day of the month: for he was grieved for David, becauſe his father had done him ſhame.

35 And it came to paſs in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field, at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he ſaid unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I ſhoot. *And* as the lad ran, he ſhot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had ſhot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and ſaid, *is* not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make ſpeed, haſte, ſtay not. And Jona-

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V. 22. *The Lord hath ſent*, &c.] In caſe Jonathan could not ſpeak with David, this was the ſignal, that his death was determined; and that the Lord required him to provide for his ſafety.

V. 26. *He is not clean.*] Saul did not aſcribe David's abſence to a criminal cauſe: but he might rather have ſuſpected that fear of his murderous rage had kept him away, than any ceremonial uncleanneſs!

V. 30. *Thou ſon*, &c.] Or "Thou ſon of perverſe "rebellion." Without entering into any critical diſcuſſion of the words of this verſe, they may be underſtood to contain the moſt ſcurrilous abuſe, which the language afforded, and as coarſe as any made uſe of in modern times: eſpecially implying that Jonathan proved himſelf not to be *his* ſon, and *diſgraced his mother*, by taking David's part againſt him. Conſidering Saul's rank, and Jonathan's relation to him, and his eminent ſervices, and excellent character, and the public and ſacred occaſion, we muſt condemn this ſpeech, as a moſt ſhameful indulgence of furious paſſion.

V. 31.] Probably Saul knew that David had been anointed by the ſame authority with himſelf: yet he oppoſed him with all his might, and vainly hoped to exclude him from the kingdom, and to put him to death. His unbelief and enmity formed a ſtriking contraſt to Jonathan's faith and love. (*Matt.* c. ii. v. 4—16.)

V. 32, 33.] When Jonathan before reaſoned with Saul, he was reduced to a better temper; but now he would not hearken to a word: and though, in order to induce Jonathan's concurrence in killing David, he pretended a great zeal for his eſtabliſhment in the kingdom; yet when his purpoſes were oppoſed, he furiouſly attempted to kill him alſo.

than's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, for as much as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains 1st. David obtaining from Ahimelech provisions, and Goliath's sword, 1—9. *2d. Fleeing to the king of Gath, and feigning himself mad,* 10—15.

V. 40—42. *His artillery, &c.*] His bow, quiver, and arrows, &c. Finding the coast clear Jonathan seized the opportunity of one more interview with his beloved friend; who, in his conduct on this occasion, united all the respect and honour due to his rank, with the most endeared affection, and glowing gratitude, so that his sorrow even exceeded Jonathan's. Nothing can be conceived more pathetic than this their parting; and we find not that they met more than once afterwards in this world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Next to the consolations of true religion, nothing is more supporting to an afflicted mind, than the converse of a pious friend: and it is most desirable to obviate misconstructions of our conduct, by those, whom we love, and esteem; lest we should lose the comfort of their friendship, and should throw temptations in *their* way. Though it is painful to suffer for well doing, yet it is far better than to suffer for evil doing; for a clear conscience, an unblemished reputation, and the favour of God are vast advantages in trying circumstances. Friendly, and pious persons are always backward to suspect others of deep malignity, but wish to impute their misconduct, where undeniable, to other causes: and pious children will veil the faults of their parents, as far as consists with other duties; and speak as favourably of them, as truth permits. But it is shameful when parents deliberately devise wickedness, which they conceal from their children, lest they should in them meet with obstacles to their criminal intentions. Evident danger from the malice of men renders it allowable for us to quit those places, where we were employed, and to take proper measures for self-preservation: yet this ought, if possible, to be so conducted, that all impartial persons may perceive the necessity, and "that the Lord hath sent us away." At sometimes it *appears to us* "that there is but a step between "us and death:" at all times we are sensible that it may be so, and should be expecting, and preparing for that event; "for as sure as the Lord liveth, and our souls now "live" in the body, we shall ere long remove into the eternal world. But let dangers appear ever so eminent, we cannot die, till the purpose of God concerning us be accomplished; and, if we are believers, until "we have "served our generation according to his will." Every expedient should be tried to prevent open quarrels, and every appearance of evil ought to be guarded against: and by little things a certain judgment may be formed of men's dispositions, and intentions. True friendship, grounded upon the covenant of the Lord, will require nothing unreasonable, and refuse nothing equitable: yet it is apt to be jealous, when fidelity is put to severe trials, and there is danger lest slander and prejudice should interrupt its course. But in reality it rests upon an immoveable basis, and possesses inconceivable force: it is stronger than death, and able to silence the voice of emulation, ambition, and undue self-love, and relative affection. Who then can comprehend the love of Jesus, who gave himself a sacrifice unto God for us rebellious, and polluted sinners! and what ought to be the force, and effects of our love to him, and his cause and people! The believer, being acquainted with the purpose of the father respecting him, willingly submits to his authority, rejoices in the prospect of his glory, and cries Hosanna to the Son of David, who cometh in the name of the Lord. Greatly desiring to have the covenant of peace ratified with the Saviour, and to love him as his own soul, he will ask and receive repeated confirmations of it, and will readily perform whatever Jesus his friend commandeth: and for his sake he will have a cordial love for those, who seek his glory, and bear his image. Assured that all his enemies will perish, he will desire the same blessings for his posterity, and his relations: and he will pray for, and weep over such of them, as reject the counsel of God against themselves: but he must separate from them, and join interests with those, whom they despise and hate.—The formal professor will sometimes be more constant at divine ordinances, than the true believer: for discomposure of mind will sometimes prevent *his* attendance; whilst the purpose, or the practice of the vilest crimes interrupt not those, who trust in the mere external observance. When envious and angry passions are indulged, men are pushed on by satan into the most indecent excesses, without respect even to character, or the most sacred obligations: nor are they aware one moment of the outrages, which they shall commit the next. Let us then fear giving place to the devil in the smallest degree. Under great provocations the meekest cannot always refrain from anger; but when its emotions are felt, our wisdom is to withdraw in silence; and it is generous to be more grieved for our insulted friends than for ourselves. Every comfort on earth is counterpoised with some sorrow; and the dearest friends must experience the most painful separations. But Christians need not sorrow as men without hope; for being one with Christ, they are one with each other; and will meet in his presence ere long to part no more, where all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.

THEN

THEN came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the prieſt: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and ſaid unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

2 And David ſaid unto Ahimelech the prieſt, The king hath commanded me a buſineſs, and hath ſaid unto me, Let no man know any thing of the buſineſs whereabout I ſend thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* ſervants to ſuch and ſuch a place.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves of* bread in mine hand, or what there is preſent.

4 And the prieſt anſwered David, and ſaid, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themſelves at leaſt from women,

5 And David anſwered the prieſt, and ſaid unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about theſe three days, ſince I came out, and the veſſels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were ſanctified this day in the veſſel.

6 So the prieſt gave him hallowed *bread:* for there was no bread there but the ſhew-bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the ſervants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefeſt of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

8 And David ſaid unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand ſpear or ſword? for I have neither brought my ſword nor my weapons with me, becauſe the king's buſineſs required haſte.

9 And the prieſt ſaid, The ſword of Goliath the Philiſtine, whom thou ſleweſt in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it:* for *there is* no other ſave that here. And David ſaid, *There is* none like that; give it me.

10 And David aroſe, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achiſh the king of Gath.

11 And the ſervants of Achiſh ſaid unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not ſing one to another of him in dances, ſaying, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands?

12 And David laid up theſe words in his heart, and was ſore afraid of Achiſh the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himſelf mad in their hands, and ſcrabbled on the doors of the gate,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1, 2. *To Nob*, &c.] The tabernacle on ſome account had been removed from Shiloh to Nob, a city of Benjamin, but the ark ſtill remained at Kirjath-jearim. David went thither to enquire of the Lord by the High Prieſt, as he had been accuſtomed to do; (c. xxii. v. 10—15;) and to take farewel of him, and of the ſanctuary, as he had of Samuel, and of Jonathan. But as he went without a ſuitable retinue, and in apparent diſtreſs, Ahimelech probably ſuſpected a breach betwixt him and Saul, and was afraid to entertain him. This proved a ſnare to David; and leſt he ſhould be betrayed to Saul, or ſent away deſtitute, he framed immediately a groſs falſehood, which cannot be excuſed, and which had fatal conſequences.

V. 3—6. It ſeems wonderful that David ſhould not be able to procure bread for himſelf, and his few attendants: but when Saul's rooted malice was made known, (and ſuch news ſpreads very rapidly,) every one would be afraid, or indiſpoſed to entertain him. However the neceſſity was real, and urgent, and Ahimelech ſuppoſed that they might in this caſe eat of the ſhew-bread, provided they were prepared in the ſame manner, as the Iſraelites had been for receiving the law from mount Sinai; (*Exod.* c. xix. v. 15. 1 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 5.) David having therefore ſatisfied him in this reſpect, and aſſured him, that the young men were ceremonially clean, and habitually holy perſons: and having pleaded, that the bread was now in a manner common, as other loaves had been placed upon the table in their ſtead, he gave him thereof, and he did eat. Jeſus Chriſt hath expreſsly vindicated both him, and David in this matter; which proves that the *poſitive* inſtitutions of religion may be diſpenſed with, when the preſervation of life, or other urgent neceſſity requires it.

V. 7. *Detained*, &c.] Doeg had been proſelyted to the religion of Iſrael, perhaps to obtain preferment from Saul; and he was at this time performing ſome vow: but as he did not love the ordinances of God, his attendance was conſtrained, and his heart was elſewhere.

V. 8, 9. *There is none like that*, &c.] It ſeems Goliath's ſword was not ſo large, but David could readily uſe it. And every time he drew it, it would remind him to bleſs

and

and let his ſpittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then ſaid Achiſh unto his ſervants, Lo, ye ſee the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my preſence? ſhall this *fellow* come into my houſe?

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. David reſorted to by his relations, and diſtreſſed perſons, entruſting his parents with the king of Moab, and inſtructed by the prophet Gad, to return into the land of Judah, v. 1—5. 2d. Saul accuſing David, Jonathan, &c, of treaſon: Ahimelech accuſed by Doeg, ſent for, pleading his cauſe; by Saul's orders murdered with the other prieſts by Doeg: and Nob utterly deſtroyed, v. 6—19. 3d. Abiathar eſcaping to David: David blaming himſelf, and aſſuring him of protection, v. 20—23.

DAVID therefore departed thence, and eſcaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's houſe heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one *that was* in diſtreſs, and every one *that was* in debt, and every one *that was* diſcontented, gathered themſelves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of

God for that victory, and to truſt in him to turn the arms of all his enemies againſt themſelves. David muſt have fled with great precipitation, as he came from home without his armour!

V. 10—15.] David expected that Saul would purſue him into every part of the land, and he was not diſpoſed to form a party againſt him. Perhaps Achiſh deemed it politic to draw off ſo able a commander from the ſervice of Saul, and therefore had given him ſome intimations, that he would protect him. But his officers judged otherwiſe: and remembering his victory over Goliath, the praiſes, which he had received, and his relation to Saul; and perhaps having heard, that he had been anointed to be "the king of the land," they deemed it impoſſible to fix him in their intereſt, and expreſſed an intention of putting him to death. This ſo alarmed David, that he feigned himſelf mad, and mimicked the actions of lunatics; which gave Achiſh the opportunity of driving him away, without either employing, or hurting him. This conduct was degrading to David's character, and diſcovered a wavering in his faith, and courage. However he ſoon recovered his confidence, and compoſure, and in theſe circumſtances compoſed both the 34th and 56th Pſalms, which are remarkable for the ſtrength of faith, and fervour of piety contained in them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When a favourite in earthly courts falls, it is commonly very rapidly: for out of fickleneſs, envy, malice, ambition, or fear, almoſt every one will deſert, or oppoſe him, without regarding the moſt unſullied reputation, eminent public ſervices, or perſonal obligations. It is therefore better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes. "Oppreſſion maketh even a wiſe man mad;" and few conduct themſelves in extreme difficulties, without taking ſome manifeſtly falſe ſtep: we ſhould therefore watch, and pray, that we enter not into temptation; and that the ſtrength of faith in God may overcome the fear of man. Ingenious falſhoods often promiſe preſent ſecurity, but they enſure future diſgrace, and diſquietude: and no impoſitions are more fooliſh, and prejudicial, than thoſe, which ſome men practiſe, in adviſing with, and ſeeking comfort from the miniſters of Chriſt. Neceſſity will juſtify us in neglecting the rituals of religion: but our attendance on holy things, ſhould be in holineſs of body, and ſoul, and with a mind as abſtracted from all earthly objects as poſſible. The true believer is glad to go to the courts of the Lord, loth to quit them, and mourns when confined from them: but the time-ſerving hypocrite is dragged to, and detained in God's ſervice, from ſecular motives, and is often forming ſchemes of wickedneſs, when he ſeems to be worſhipping God! What wonder then that his ſacrifice is an abomination to the Lord? The remembrance of former mercies not only revives gratitude, but inſpires freſh confidence, and courage: and the word of God is that ſword of the Spirit, concerning which in all temptations, and conflicts, we may well ſay, "there is "none like it." In this world we muſt paſs from one danger to another, and meet with terror where we ſeek ſecurity: and thoſe very honours, of which men are ambitious, expoſe them to manifold diſadvantages, and perils: nor can we expect our ſituation to be better, whilſt the beſt of characters are ſo inconſiſtent, and defective. But we may truſt in the Lord at all times; he will ſupply our wants, and not forſake us, notwithſtanding our infirmities: he will not leave the lives of his people in the hands of their enemies, nor their ſouls in diſconſolation: and the more ſimply we depend on, and obey him, the more comfortably and ſurely we ſhall walk through this troubleſome world, to that reſt, which is reſerved for the people of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1—2.] David, unable to ſecure himſelf by flight, and none venturing to harbour him, hid himſelf in a cave, (*Pſalm* cxlii.) Thither his relations reſorted to him for protection, and to afford him aſſiſtance: along with them alſo came a number of perſons of broken fortunes, and unſettled minds, of whom he formed a ſmall army: but they acted entirely upon the defenſive, and were protectors of the country: and probably David's inſtructions, devotions, and example produced a great change in their temper, and behaviour.

V. 3. *The king of Moab*, &c.] (*Note, Jud.* c. xi. v. 11.) This prince, being favourable to David, he there ſecured a quiet retreat for his aged parents.

Moab:

Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, (which was set over the servants of Saul,) and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, and who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house.

V. 5. *The prophet Gad*, &c.] Probably he had been under Samuel's tuition. By him God commanded David not to abide in Moab, but to return into the land of Judah, that he might not be alienated from his brethren, nor his men enticed to idolatry; that his faith might be exercised, and increased; and that he still might perform some service to his country.

V. 6. *Under a tree*, &c.] Saul pitched his tent, or set up his standard upon some eminence, (for so the word Ramah signifies,) near Gibeah: and with a spear in his hand seemed to menace vengeance against all, who did not join him in persecuting David.

V. 7, 8.] This language is very expressive of rage, and jealousy. He took it for granted that David had conspired his death. His pious, amiable, and dutiful son also was accused of being the ringleader in this conspiracy; because he would not assist in, or connive at the murder of an excellent man, whom he greatly loved. Nay the people in general, and his own tribe in particular had conspired against him, and had no compassion on him, and were blind to their own interests: because they were not so furious against David as he was!

V. 9, 10.] There was no reason why Doeg should mention the High Priest's conduct, which he knew did not proceed from malice: and if he must needs mention it, he should have declared how he was imposed upon by David, and that he intended to shew respect to Saul in that very action.

V. 13. *Enquired of God*, &c.] Saul, almost in direct terms, charged God himself, as counselling a traitor by his High Priest, how to prevail against his sovereign! So rash, and unreasonable is furious anger.

V. 14, 15.] In Ahimelech's ready attendance with all his brethren, and in his answer to Saul, we have the conduct, and language of conscious innocence. David's reputation for fidelity and capacity was established: his near relation, and prompt obedience to Saul, and his honourable services to the public were well known: he had been used to enquire of the Lord for him, as a public person: for his part he meant no harm, knew nothing of what had passed, and abhorred the thought of conspiring against his prince; and therefore trusted he should be honourably acquitted. It is observable that he generously concealed David's imposition, though it tended to exculpate himself.

17 And the king ſaid unto the footmen that ſtood about him, Turn and ſlay the prieſts of the LORD; becauſe their hand alſo *is* with David, and becauſe they knew when he fled, and did not ſhew it to me. But the ſervants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the prieſts of the LORD.

18 And the king ſaid to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the prieſts. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the prieſts, and ſlew on that day fourſcore and five perſons that did wear a linen ephod.

19 And Nob, the city of the prieſts, ſmote he with the edge of the ſword; both men and women, children and ſucklings, and oxen, and aſſes, and ſheep, with the edge of the ſword.

20 And one of the ſons of Ahimelech the ſon of Ahitub, named Abiathar, eſcaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar ſhewed David that Saul had ſlain the LORD's prieſts.

22 And David ſaid unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would ſurely tell Saul: I have occaſioned *the death* of all the perſons of thy father's houſe.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that ſeeketh my life ſeeketh thy life: but with me thou *ſhalt be* in ſafeguard.

But Saul was forſaken of God, and given up to ſatan, and his own vile paſſions, and would hearken to nothing, but the ſuggeſtions of revenge, and jealouſy.

V. 17. *But the ſervants*, &c.] They might expect on this refuſal to feel the weight of the king's reſentment: yet the command was ſo barbarous, and impious, that they would not obey it.

V. 18. *That did wear*, &c.] That is, officiating prieſts, who probably were now dreſſed in their ſacerdotal veſtments. Theſe, to the number of eighty-five, this Edomite with his own hands ſlew at once, without provocation, or oppoſition! And both Saul and Doeg ſeem to have gloried, in taking this vengeance on the prieſts of the Lord, as they knew that they favoured the cauſe of David; (*Pſalm* lii.) Yet this horrible maſſacre was an accompliſhment of the ſentence denounced againſt the houſe of Eli. (c. ii. 31—33. c. iii. 12—14.)

V. 19. *And Nob*, &c.] Nob was not originally allotted to the prieſts, but on ſome account had ſince been given them: and Doeg, doubtleſs by Saul's authority, who was not ſatisfied with the blood of God's prieſts, treated it, and all therein, as the devoted enemies of God.

V. 22. *I knew it*, &c.] Upon recollection David feared this conſequence from Doeg's known character. His feelings muſt have been exceeding painful, when he conſidered his falſhood as one probable occaſion of this fatal cataſtrophe! By this event, ſo terrible to the prieſts, and lamentable to Iſrael, David obtained the preſence of the High Prieſt, which afterwards proved a comfort to him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Oppreſſion often forces men into meaſures, to which they were entirely averſe, and deprives the community of the ſervices of it's moſt uſeful members: yet the Lord will preſerve his people for their appointed work, however they may be hated, and expoſed. He can promote their good by the moſt contemptible, and meaneſt inſtruments: and the Son of David receives all, who come to him, however vile, and miſerable; he changes them all into an holy people, and employs them in his ſervice: and they, who would reign with him, muſt be contented firſt to ſuffer with, and for him. True piety increaſes, and purifies natural affection, in its due ſubordination to the love of God; and teaches men, however occupied, or diſtreſſed, to be reſpectful to, and tender of their aged parents; and to be more ready to meet hardſhip, or danger themſelves, than to expoſe *them* to it. In all our difficulties we ſhould wait till we know what God will do for us; for our enemies can go no further, than he is pleaſed to permit them: we ſhould therefore guard againſt exceſſive fear; venture readily into any place, whither duty call us; and without yielding to reſentment or deſpondency, perſevere in looking out for opportunities of uſefulneſs. The progreſs of human nature, inſtigated by ſatan's temptations, is from bad to worſe, and with increaſing rapidity. Conſcience, fear, and ſhame give leſs, and leſs reſiſtance, and every paſſion grows more and more exorbitant. Envy, malice, and jealouſy torment the ſoul with ideal miſeries: the wretch, who is under their dominion ſuſpects every one of enmity, and treachery; breaks through all the bonds of honour, and conſcience; and is hurried on to the moſt furious, and bloody revenges. Unhappy is it for mankind when ſuch perſons poſſeſs unlimited authority: the moſt ſacred character, unſhaken fidelity, conſcious innocency, unblemiſhed reputation, convincing arguments, reſpectful aſſurances will form no ſecurity to any one, who is become obnoxious to them: the moſt harmleſs, and friendly actions become conſtructive treaſon, and "thou ſhalt ſurely "die," ſilences every plea: nay the death of one, or of a few ſeems a paltry revenge to a proud tyrant: (*Eſther* c. iii. v. 6;) ſacrifices large as his rage, and power may be expected, for nothing elſe can appeaſe his fury. And if ſome be found willing to venture his indignation, rather than abet his cruelty, and impiety; others will be glad to purchaſe preferment at any price. Let us then bleſs God for a mild, equitable, and limited government, and ſtudy to fill up our places in ſociety ſuitable to our peculiar advantages: may the Lord continue them to our remoteſt poſterity, and extend the ſame to all the nations of the earth! The Lord often employs companions in diſtreſs to comfort and protect each other; and being expoſed to the ſame dangers, and enemies, they ſhould combine for their mutual defence. Thus believers, being hated for Chriſt's ſake, find ſafety under his protection, and ought to lay

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1*st. David defending Keilah againſt the Philiſtines*, 1—6. 2*d. Eſcaping thence into the wilderneſs of Ziph, purſued by Saul; met, and encouragad by Jonathan; and protected by the Lord*, 7—18. 3*d. The Ziphites informing Saul of him, his purſuit of him, and David's preſervation by an invaſion of the Philiſtines*, 19—29.

THEN they told David, ſaying, Behold, the Philiſtines fight againſt Keilah, and they rob the threſhing-floors.

2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, ſaying, Shall I go and ſmite theſe Philiſtines? And the LORD ſaid unto David, Go and ſmite the Philiſtines, and ſave Keilah.

3 And David's men ſaid unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah againſt the armies of the Philiſtines?

4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD anſwered him and ſaid, Ariſe, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philiſtines into thine hand.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philiſtines, and brought away their cattle, and ſmote them with a great ſlaughter. So David ſaved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to paſs, when Abiathar the ſon of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod.

7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul ſaid, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is ſhut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to beſiege David and his men.

9 And David knew that Saul ſecretly practiſed miſchief againſt him; and he ſaid to Abiathar the prieſt, Bring hither the ephod.

10 Then ſaid David, O LORD God of Iſrael, thy ſervant hath certainly heard that Saul ſeeketh to come to Keilah, to deſtroy the city for my ſake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy ſervant hath heard? O LORD God of Iſrael, I beſeech thee, tell thy ſervant. And the LORD ſaid, He will come down.

12 Then ſaid David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? and the LORD ſaid, They will deliver *thee* up.

13 Then David and his men, *which were* about ſix hundred, aroſe and departed out of Keilah, and went whitherſoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was eſcaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderneſs in ſtrong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderneſs of Ziph: and Saul ſought

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aſide all perſonal animoſities, and uſeleſs controverſies, to unite together againſt their common enemies. We may alſo learn from this narration; that *needleſsly* to report the truth, to the diſadvantage of others, often ſprings from malice, and produces miſchief: that a partial ſtatement of facts is effectual bearing falſe witneſs: that a generous mind is unwilling to repeat the faults of others, even for his own vindication: that it is very painful to a feeling heart to occaſion evil to others, eſpecially by miſconduct: that unexpected bad conſequences may ariſe from our actions, which ſhould warn us to walk circumſpectly: and that we ſhould always be ready for death, which hurries men into eternity before they are aware; "For the wicked "is driven away in his wickedneſs, but the righteous hath "hope in his death!"

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *Enquired of the Lord*, &c.] David was at this time inſpired as a penman of the holy ſcriptures; yet the Lord ſpake to him by his prophet, and then by the High Prieſt, for the honour of his own inſtitutions. David ſtill conſidered himſelf the protector of the land, and was ready to employ his men in any ſervice, that the Lord was pleaſed to appoint him to.

V. 7, 8. *God hath delivered*, &c.] Saul, forgetting all the proofs, which he had that the Lord was with David, conſidered this ſlight circumſtance as an evidence that God had delivered him into his hands: as if every fair appearance enſured ſucceſs; or any ſucceſs could ſanctify wickedneſs. "But God delivered him not into his hand," (v. 14.)

V. 9—13.] David perhaps thought that he could defend this fenced city againſt Saul, if the inhabitants would be firm in his intereſts. But as they would fear the ſame dreadful maſſacre, with which Nob had been deſtroyed, he could not confide in their aſſurances: he therefore enquired of God, and was informed that they would purchaſe peace by delivering him up, though perhaps they were not meditating ſuch ingratitude, and treachery. He therefore left the city, to ſecure himſelf from danger, and them from temptation and ſin.

him

him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand.

15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

17 And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee: and that also Saul my father knoweth.

18 And they two made a covenant before the LORD. And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon?

20 Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand.

21 And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly.

23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

25 Saul also and his men went to seek *him*; and they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.

V. 16. *Strengthened his hand*, &c.] Jonathan would doubtless converse with him of the promise, the power, faithfulness, and love of God, and what he had heard, and experienced of them; which strengthened his wavering faith, encouraged his declining hope, and invigorated his dependance on, and submission to God.

V. 17. *I shall be next*, &c.] This was Jonathan's conjecture, grounded on David's friendship, not upon the word of God, who had appointed things otherwise: Jonathan's chearful resignation would be a sensible satisfaction to David's mind.

V. 21. *Blessed*, &c.] The Israelites in general were, it seems, averse to Saul's persecution of David, and backward to give him intelligence, or assistance: he therefore deemed himself an unfortunate man, whom none of them pitied; and these treacherous Ziphites were considered as his only friends (*Psalm* liv.) In the midst of his wickedness Saul affected the language of piety: but whether he deceived himself, or intended to mislead others, is not certain.

V. 26—28.] When Saul's army had nearly surrounded David's company, tidings were brought that the Philistines had invaded the land: and either their invasion was very formidable, or Saul feared the people's resentment, if the Philistines ravaged the country, whilst he was destroying their defender; However he retired, doubtless full of rage, and indignation, and David escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the Philistines, without intending it, being the instruments in God's hand of his preservation. On this account the place was called "the rock of divi-"sions," as separating betwixt David, and his bloody persecutor.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prayers of true believers are a barrier against hostile invasions; but the persecution of them brings down the judgments of God upon guilty nations. However, no ill usage must prompt them to revenge themselves, or prevent them from doing good to their neighbours, as they have opportunity, and ability; even when they are sure to be recompensed by ingratitude, and exposed to further trouble. Thus Jesus lived, and died, and left us an example, that we should follow his steps. The more particularly we seek direction from God in fervent prayer, and

CHAP.

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C. R. Ryley del. *Clay sculp.*

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CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. David ſparing Saul's life, and cutting off his ſkirt, 1—7. 2d. His pathetic reaſoning with Saul, and its effects upon him, 8—22.

AND it came to paſs, when Saul was returned from following the Philiſtines, that it was told him, ſaying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderneſs of En-gedi.

2 Then Saul took three thouſand choſen men out of all Iſrael, and went to ſeek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the ſheep-cotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the ſides of the cave.

4 And the men of David ſaid unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD ſaid unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayeſt do to him as it ſhall ſeem good unto thee. Then David aroſe, and cut off the ſkirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to paſs afterward, that David's heart ſmote him, becauſe he had cut off Saul's ſkirt.

6 And he ſaid unto his men, The LORD forbid that I ſhould do this thing unto my maſter, the LORD's anointed, to ſtretch forth mine hand againſt him, ſeeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.

7 So David ſtayed his ſervants with theſe words, and ſuffered them not to riſe againſt Saul. But Saul roſe up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

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the more carefully we conſult the ſacred ſcriptures, the ſafer will be our path. In difficult circumſtances we ſhall find the unbelief of our profeſſed helpers, a very diſcouraging hindrance: but referring them to the plain precepts, and promiſes of God's word, is our moſt effectual method of anſwering their objections, and ſecuring their aſſiſtance. No natural ties of honour, gratitude, or affection, can ſecure the heart under powerful temptations: nay, we none of us know how we ſhould act, if aſſailed by the terrors of impending death, and left without the immediate ſupports of divine grace. He, who made the human heart, can alone eſtimate its deceitfulneſs: we ought not to confide abſolutely in our own reſolutions, or in the aſſurances of others: but ſhould depend on the Lord to guide, and keep us; and if we meet with evil treatment, we need not wonder, and ought not to revile, or murmur. The kindneſs of thoſe friends, whom he raiſes up for us, where we could leaſt expect them, may well countervail the malice of our enemies, and the ingratitude, and ficklenes of thoſe, whom we have ſerved. And if the converſe of one friend can, at one interview, occaſion comfort, and ſtrength, to our hearts, what may not be expected from the continual ſupports, and daily viſits, and powerful love of the ſinner's Saviour, the believer's covenanted friend? And what will heaven be, where perfect, univerſal friendſhip reigns, without interruption, ſeparation, or alloy? Let us then continually ſeek the renewed ratification of the covenant of grace, and cultivate the friendſhip of the Lord, and of his people. Our moſt rational, and pleaſing expectations of another kind may be fruſtrated; all other unions muſt be diſſolved: but here diſappointment, and diſunion can have no place for ever. The influence of wickedneſs in thoſe, who fill exalted ſtations, widely, and fatally diffuſes itſelf amongſt their inferiors: many will pay court to them, by aiding their ſinful purpoſes; nay ſome will pride themſelves in reſembling them in their vices: and they only will be treated as friends, who are in fact their moſt deſtructive enemies. Such diſtinguiſhed perſons have therefore many additional reaſons for bridling their paſſions, and exerciſing themſelves unto godlineſs; leſt they ſhould occaſion the ruin of multitudes, and thus aggravate their own condemnation. The language of piety, ſeparate from its ſubſtantial effects, can only amuſe and deceive thoſe, who hear, and thoſe who uſe it. Malice is ever reſtleſs, and tormenting; and though diſappointed, it ſtill hopes for ſucceſs: but numbers, power, rage and ſubtlety can never deſtroy thoſe, whom God protects. His methods of preſerving his people are unnumbered; and he ſometimes leads them into the moſt imminent danger, to endear their deliverance, and to increaſe the torment of their perſecuting foes. And he can employ one enemy to deliver us from another, without their ever intending it; or fill the hands of perſecutors with other work, ſo that they are conſtrained to poſtpone their malicious purpoſes: they then are happy who live in ſimple dependance on, and obedience to him. But we muſt not expect much comfort in this evil world, which ſo ill uſes the beſt of men, and which once crucified the Lord of Glory. We ſhould therefore ſtudy to paſs through it as pilgrims; and to leave it, as they, who are departing to a better, that is an heavenly country.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 3.] When Saul had repelled the Philiſtines, he reſumed his purſuit of David, who had taken refuge in ſome uncultivated rocky part of the country, inhabited only by the wild goats. But when Saul ſuppoſed David, and his men to be at ſome diſtance, he retired into a cave, either for ſleep, or ſome neceſſary occaſion, whilſt his men were abſent: in this cave David and his men lay concealed, and Saul diſcovered them not; and thus, "God had delivered him into David's "hand," (c. xxiii. v. 7:) he was abſolutely in his power, could have made no reſiſtance; nor would the cauſe of his death have been known, until David had taken proper meaſures to ſecure himſelf, and to ſeize the vacant throne.

V. 4—7.] David's men urged *very plauſibly*, that God had brought his enemy into his power, in order to fulfil his promiſes to him: yet they were greatly miſtaken. The

8 David alſo aroſe afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, ſaying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David ſtooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himſelf.

9 And David ſaid to Saul, Wherefore heareſt thou men's words, ſaying, Behold, David ſeeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have ſeen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *ſome* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* ſpared thee; and I ſaid, I will not put forth mine hand againſt my lord; for he *is* the LORD's anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, ſee, yea, ſee the ſkirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the ſkirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and ſee that *there is* neither evil nor tranſgreſſion in mine hand, and I have not ſinned againſt thee: yet thou hunteſt my ſoul to take it.

12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee; but mine hand ſhall not be upon thee.

13 As ſaith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand ſhall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the king of Iſrael come out? after whom doſt thou purſue? after a dead dog, after a flea?

15 The LORD therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee, and ſee, and plead my cauſe, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16 And it came to paſs, when David had made an end of ſpeaking theſe words unto Saul, that Saul ſaid, *Is* this thy voice, my ſon David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

17 And he ſaid to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou haſt ſhewed this day how that thou haſt dealt well with me: foraſmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not.

Lord really intended to give David an opportunity of exerciſing faith, patience, and genuine love for his enemy: of ſhewing the tendency of his religion, the tenderneſs of his conſcience, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of his loyalty; for the confutation of his accuſers, a rebuke to Saul, and an example to all, who read of it. He had a promiſe of the kingdom, but no command to ſlay the reigning king: Saul had been anointed by God's command, as well as placed over Iſrael in his providence: his rejection had indeed been denounced; and David had been greatly injured, but he was not appointed his own avenger: ſubjection to the powers, that are, is the believer's general rule of duty: David's peculiar circumſtances conſtrained him to defend himſelf, but not to ſlay Saul; whom he looked upon, and reverenced as his ſovereign, and the Lord's anointed; and not as *his* rival and perſecutor. He aimed to perform his preſent duty; and left his protection, and future advancement to the Lord; and he deemed it an atrocious offence to "ſtretch forth his hand" to hurt even ſo wicked a prince as Saul, and in defence of his own life. Nay, when he had privily cut off the ſkirt of Saul's robe, as a demonſtration of what he could have done, his heart ſmote him, leſt in this action he had failed of his due reſpect to the Lord's anointed: and he would no more allow his men to injure him, than he would do it himſelf!

V. 8—15.] Nothing can be imagined more reſpectful, pathetic, and forcible, than David's conduct, and addreſs on this occaſion. He ſhewed all reverence to Saul as his prince, bowing himſelf before him to the earth: he called him reſpectfully, "My lord the king," and in token of affection, "My father," (being his ſon-in-law;) he avoided all reproaches, or ſharp expoſtulations; he intimated that Saul's prejudice againſt him aroſe from ſlanderous reports; and reminded him, that he had been counſelled to take away his life, but would not do it. He adduced the moſt deciſive evidence, that he meant not to injure him; whilſt he aſſured him, that his hand ſhould never be upon him: he mildly expoſtulated with him on the injuſtice, and unreaſonableneſs of his conduct; and humbly repreſented himſelf as beneath the notice of ſo great a prince, who degraded himſelf in coming out "after a dead dog, a "ſingle flea," an imagined enemy, equally inſignificant. In illuſtration of the affair he quoted the proverb of the ancients, that "wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked:" that men's actions manifeſt their diſpoſitions; and if he had been a wicked perſon, his conduct that day would have ſhewn it: or, that nothing but evil can be expected from, or happen to the wicked; wherefore he would have no part with them. At the ſame time he plainly, and repeatedly warned Saul, that the Lord would judge betwixt them, and both deliver him out of his hand, and avenge his cauſe upon him, if he perſiſted in his injurious treatment of him.

V. 16—22.] David's forcible words, and generous behaviour produced a temporary conviction in Saul's mind of his excellency, the righteouſneſs of his cauſe, and the certainty of his advancement; and conſequently that himſelf was culpable, and in a ruinous path. Probably he was in ſome meaſure convinced of theſe things at other times; but they now more deeply affected his mind; nor could he ſuppreſs his emotion, or refuſe to acknowledge his convictions: and inſtead of attempting to deſtroy David, as he intended, his malice was, as it were, arreſted; and he both ſpake well of him, foretold his eſtabliſhment on the throne, and begged of the Lord to reward him for ſparing his life; and allowed, that he ſhould not have behaved thus to him, if he had been in his power. In conſequence of this con-

19 For

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore, the LORD reward thee good for that thou haſt done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know well that thou ſhalt ſurely be king, and that the kingdom of Iſrael ſhall be eſtabliſhed in thine hand.

21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my ſeed after me, and that thou wilt not deſtroy my name out of my father's houſe.

22 And David ſware unto Saul, and Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

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viction Saul deſired of David the ſecurity of an oath, that he would not, when king, extirpate his poſterity: but it would have been better, if he had been more concerned about his ſoul, and leſs about his name, and his ſeed: and if he had endeavoured himſelf to reward him, or rather to do him juſtice. And his confeſſion, that David was "more righteous than he," and that he rewarded him evil, without mentioning his ſin againſt the Lord, were not the language of a true penitent. However David was willing to give him the required ſecurity, and to bind himſelf to his duty: but he did not require Saul to ſwear to him, that he would no more ſeek his life; knowing that he regarded not the obligation of an oath, and that it would only ſerve to increaſe his guilt: nor would he truſt himſelf to him, being aware, how little ſuch tranſient appearances can be depended on. When David gave up ſome of Saul's poſterity to be put to death, (2 *Sam.* c. xxi. v. 1—14:) he acted by divine command, and therefore did not violate his oath to Saul; for it was not David, but the Lord who ordered that execution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wicked men are often interrupted in their evil courſes by afflictions, but return to them, when the reſtraint is removed: as if they were delivered, that they might commit more ſins: but the Lord reſtrains, and diſappoints their malice; and, by bringing them into danger, gives them manifeſt proof of their folly and wickedneſs. We muſt be careful how we interpret God's providences; leſt we miſtake the opportunity, for the permiſſion, to follow our own inclinations: and in doubtful caſes we muſt not judge by appearance, or be determined by mere plauſible arguments. An accurate knowledge of the divine law, an eſtabliſhed judgment, and an holy temper of heart muſt combine in marking out the path of duty, in ſome important caſes. But it is always ſafe to deny the ſuggeſtions of revenge, covetouſneſs, ambition, impatience, or any other ſelfiſh principle: and it ſavours more of piety to interpret a providential diſpenſation as a trial of faith, and patience, and an exerciſe of ſelf-denial; than to conſider it as a licenſe for ſelf-indulgence: and a tender conſcience will fear a plauſible temptation, and avoid all approach to, and appearance of evil. We muſt perform all our relative duties from regard to the authority of God; and when others violate his law in their conduct towards us, we are not allowed to do the ſame towards them: and in waiting the performance of God's promiſes we muſt uſe only lawful means, and not wiſh to anticipate his time. Under the deepeſt injuries, we muſt not avenge ourſelves, but after the example of David, and of David's lord, we muſt commit ourſelves to him, that judgeth righteouſly. Magiſtracy is the ordinance of God, and confers dignity on thoſe, who are advanced to it; who in all ordinary caſes, and lawful things, are to be honoured, and obeyed: and if they abuſe their truſt, the Lord will execute vengeance upon them. If we are perſecuted in one city, we may flee to another, and uſe neceſſary means of ſelf-preſervation: but we muſt not lift our hands, or adopt any offenſive meaſures, againſt thoſe, whom God in his providence hath placed over us; though like Saul, or Nero. That is, in our private capacity as Chriſtian members of ſociety: for the word of God determines nothing concerning the different kinds of government; or againſt the *conſtitutional rights* of legal *collective bodies* to defend their liberties againſt ambitious tyrants, and uſurpers. We muſt not only avoid evil ourſelves, but uſe our influence to reſtrain others, or we ſhall be chargeable before God for it. Mild language, and reſpectful behaviour, even to wicked, and injurious ſuperiors, are ornamental to piety: and though we muſt not flatter any man with the hope of impunity in ſin; yet we may put the moſt candid conſtruction upon their actions; and ſatisfy ourſelves with manifeſting our own innocence, modeſtly complaining of hard uſage, and with employing forcible arguments, and pathetic expoſtulations; without venting virulent invective, or exaſperating reproaches. It is alſo more prudent to abate envy, by ſeeking to appear inconſiderable, than to excite it, by boaſting of dignity, or excellence. Whilſt we are thankful for being preſerved from open crimes hitherto, we cannot bind ourſelves too ſtrongly, in dependance on the grace of God, to avoid them for the time to come: for our conduct ſhould form a contraſt to that of the enemies of true religion; that all men may perceive upon what principles we act, and be convinced that our cauſe is worthy of God. A proper conſideration of the dignity of men's characters, in eminent ſtations, or of the excellency of their immortal ſouls, would tend to keep them from debaſing themſelves by ſuch mean purſuits, as they are commonly engaged in. They who act conſcientiouſly, will find opportunities of confuting their revilers, and of being manifeſted in the conſciences of their moſt determined enemies: and at length the Lord will plead and avenge their cauſe. Flattering and ſlanderous favourites are the bane of princes: by hearing their words, they prefer their enemies, and perſecute their friends; becauſe the clamour of their paſſions ſilences the whiſper of their conſciences. But the moſt atrocious ſinners have ſome ſeaſons of remorſe, when they perceive, and are affected with their ſituation: they are almoſt perſuaded to renounce their ſins; they are convinced of the ſuperior excellency of true Chriſtians, as acting from principles ſuperior, and even contrary to thoſe, which influence their own conduct: they cannot withhold from them a good word, and a good wi h, and at once forbode their own miſery, and their felicity. Yet they are not truly humbled, or

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1*ſt. The death of Samuel, v.* 1. 2*d. Some account of Nabal, and Abigail his wife, v.* 2, 3. 3*d. David's petition to Nabal, his rude anſwer, and David's reſentment, v.* 4—13—21, 22. 4*th. Abigail meeting, and pacifying David, v.* 14—20. 23—35. 5*th. Nabal's death, and David's marriage with Abigail, v.* 36—42. 6*th. His taking Ahinoam alſo to wife, Michal having been given to another, v.* 43, 44.

AND Samuel died; and all the Iſraelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his houſe at Ramah. And David aroſe, and went down to the wilderneſs of Paran.

2 And *there was* a man in Maon, whoſe poſſeſſions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thouſand ſheep, and a thouſand goats: and he was ſhearing his ſheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *ſhe was* a woman of good underſtanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churliſh and evil in his doings: and he *was* of the houſe of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderneſs that Nabal did ſhear his ſheep.

5 And David ſent out ten young men, and David ſaid unto the young men, Get ye up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus ſhall ye ſay to him that liveth *in proſperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine houſe, and peace *be* unto all that thou haſt.

7 And now I have heard that thou haſt ſhearers: now thy ſhepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought miſſing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Aſk thy young men, and they will ſhew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatſoever cometh to thine hand unto thy ſervants, and to thy ſon David.

9 And when David's young men came, they ſpake to Nabal according to all thoſe

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changed; ſin and the world reign in their hearts; they acknowledge that they are not ſo good, as ſome are, but will not confeſs how very vile they are: they are more careful about their credit, and intereſt in the world, than about the forgiveneſs of their ſins; and whilſt they confeſs their own injuſtice, and their obligations to others; they leave it to the Lord to repay them. They, who are *experimentally* acquainted with the grace of God, will place little dependance on ſuch appearances, eſpecially in thoſe who have long ſtifled their convictions, and ſinned againſt the light of their own conſciences: for they fear that theſe tranſient affections alſo will ſubſide, and leave the heart ſtill harder than before. Men ſhould therefore be afraid of rebelling againſt the light, and quenching the Spirit of God, when producing convictions in their conſciences; leſt he ſtrive no more with them, but leave them to be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin. The grace of God will teach us to forgive and be kind to our enemies; but not to truſt thoſe, who have repeatedly deceived us: for malice often ſeems dead, when it is only dormant, and will ere long revive with double force. Yet, whether the Lord fill, or bind men's hands; or awe, and affect their hearts, ſo that they loſe for a ſeaſon their inclination to hurt us; the deliverance is from him, an evidence of his love, and an earneſt of our final ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1. *Samuel died,* &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been within two years of the death of Saul, who permitted Samuel to cloſe his days in peace: to the end of his life he doubtleſs preſided over the ſeminary of prophets, and, by his prayers, inſtructions and example, was very uſeful in private, though he intermeddled not in public buſineſs. When he died, the people were very ſenſible of their loſs, and of their ſin, and folly in rejecting him, and made general lamentations for him. Upon this event David removed into the wilderneſs of Paran, in part of which Iſrael wandered, before they entered Canaan; perhaps concluding that Saul's malice would be now more unreſtrained than ever.

V. 2. *Carmel.*] Not mount Carmel in the north of Canaan, (1 *Kings* c. xviii. v. 19:) but another place of the ſame name towards the ſouth.

V. 6. *That liveth,* &c.] The words "in proſperity," are not in the original, though evidently implied. David ſeems to have ſpoken unadviſedly, in calling a wicked man living in luxury, one "that liveth," as if his own indigence ſcarce deſerved the name of life. For Nabal "living in pleaſure was dead in ſin;" and David, though deſtitute, was alive to God.

V. 8. *Aſk,* &c.] David not only reſtrained his men from moleſting Nabal's flocks, but protected them againſt the depredations of their invaders. He might therefore have demanded a reward for his ſervices: but he was rather deſirous of becoming his ſupplicant, for whatever came to hand, in that ſeaſon of feſtivity; as he was in great diſtreſs, and unwilling to ſubſiſt by plunder.

words

words in the name of David, and ceaſed.

10 And Nabal anſwered David's ſervants, and ſaid, Who *is* David? and who *is* the ſon of Jeſſe? There be many ſervants now a days that break away every man from his maſter.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh that I have killed for my ſhearers, and give *it* unto men whom I know not whence they *be*?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all thoſe ſayings.

13 And David ſaid unto his men, Gird ye on every man his ſword. And they girded on every man his ſword; and David alſo girded on his ſword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the ſtuff.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, ſaying, Behold, David ſent meſſengers out of the wilderneſs to ſalute our maſter; and he railed on them.

15 But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither miſſed we any thing, as long as we were converſant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping tbe ſheep.

17 Now therefore know and conſider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined againſt our maſter, and againſt all his houſhold: for he *is ſuch* a ſon of Belial, that *a man* cannot ſpeak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haſte, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five ſheep ready dreſſed, and five meaſures of parched *corn*, and an hundred cluſters of raiſins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on aſſes.

19 And ſhe ſaid unto her ſervants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But ſhe told not her huſband Nabal:

20 And it was *ſo*, *as* ſhe rode on the aſs, that ſhe came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down againſt her; and ſhe met them.

21 Now David had ſaid, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderneſs, ſo that nothing was miſſed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more alſo do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him, by the morning light, any that piſſeth againſt the wall.

23 And when Abigail ſaw David, ſhe haſted, and lighted off the aſs, and fell before David

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V. 10. *Who is David?* &c.] Nabal well knew that David had ſlain Goliath, and often ſmitten the Philiſtines: that he was a man of eminent valour, and capacity, and of unblemiſhed reputation: that he was the ſon-in-law of Saul, and unjuſtly perſecuted: and that in his preſent neceſſity, he behaved in an unexceptionable manner. But to vindicate his ſelfiſh refuſal, he abuſed him as one of the many runaway ſlaves, who then deſerted their maſter's ſervice; and thus he fooliſhly rendered his anſwer as exaſperating, as he knew how!

V. 13. *And David ſaid*, &c.] David had been upon his guard againſt anger, and revenge, when ill uſed by Saul: but he did not expect ſuch language, and treatment from Nabal; and therefore he was off his guard, and in great indignation determined to avenge himſelf. It was alſo more humiliating, to be inſulted by ſuch a man as Nabal, than to be perſecuted by the king.

V. 17. *For evil is determined*, &c.] Whether this ſervant had got any intelligence of David's determination, or only formed a ſhrewd conjecture from circumſtances, doth not appear. But anxious for his own ſafety, as well as for that of the family, he dared not to mention his apprehenſions to Nabal, who would probably have abuſed him for his impertinence: and therefore he applied to Abigail, complaining that his maſter was ſuch a ſon of Belial, that a man could "not ſpeak unto him:" words not proper to have been uſed by a ſervant concerning his maſter, if the urgency of the caſe had not required them.

V. 19. *She told not*, &c.] Abigail was about to diſpoſe largely of Nabal's property without his conſent; but it was for the preſervation of him and his family: yet ſhe knew that his obſtinacy would ruin them all, if he were made acquainted with her deſign; the cauſe therefore fully juſtified her conduct.

V. 21, 22.] David, in his ſober judgment, knew better, than to repent of his good deeds, or to think them done in vain, becauſe they were requited with ingratitude: his determination to deſtroy every male of Nabal's family, for his fault, was unjuſt, and cruel in the extreme, and more like Saul, than himſelf: and his confirming this with a kind of oath, (though he turned off the imprecation from himſelf unto his enemies,) was very raſh, and favoured of profaneneſs. Had he been permitted to have executed his purpoſe of revenge, it would have occaſioned him much bitter reflection, greatly tarniſhed his character, and given his enemies a vaſt advantage againſt him.

V. 23—31.] The conduct, and addreſs of Abigail on

on her face, and bowed herſelf to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and ſaid, Upon me, my lord, *upon* me *let this* iniquity *be:* and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, ſpeak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, ſo *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid ſaw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didſt ſend.

26 Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy ſoul liveth, ſeeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *ſhed* blood, and from avenging thyſelf with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that ſeek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this bleſſing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 I pray thee, forgive the treſpaſs of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a ſure houſe; becauſe my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days.

29 Yet a man is riſen to purſue thee, and to ſeek thy ſoul: but the ſoul of my lord ſhall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the ſouls of thine enemies, them ſhall he ſling out, *as out* of the middle of a ſling.

30 And it ſhall come to paſs, when the LORD ſhall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath ſpoken concerning thee, and ſhall have appointed thee ruler over Iſrael;

31 That this ſhall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou haſt ſhed blood cauſeleſs, or that my lord hath avenged himſelf: but when the LORD ſhall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 And David ſaid to Abigail, Bleſſed *be* the LORD God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet me:

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this emergency are worthy of admiration. Nabal had inſulted David, as a run-away ſlave: in order to pacify him, Abigail ſhewed him the reverence due to a ſuperior, and to her ſovereign, in the purpoſe of God: though he was evidently in an unbecoming heat, ſhe took no notice of it; but only intreated him, to allow her, as if ſhe were the criminal, to plead her cauſe, and to give her a candid hearing. She could not palliate her huſband's conduct, and the caſe did not allow her to veil his infirmities: but ſhe attempted to convert his well-known raſhneſs, and imprudence, (which accorded to his name, that ſignifies folly,) into an argument with David, why he ſhould lay aſide his reſentment: for Nabal meant no peculiar affront to him, it was his fooliſh way with every body; and it was beneath a perſon of David's character, and eminence, to take any notice of the rudeneſs of ſuch a man: but had ſhe been preſent his young men ſhould have had better treatment. She was confident that the Lord had ſent her to keep his ſervant David "from avenging himſelf with "his own hand," which ſhe knew he could not calmly think of without horrour: and ſhe ſolemnly deſired, that as ſure, as the Lord lived, and as David's ſoul lived, all that ſought evil to him, might be as weak, and infatuated in their counſels, as Nabal: and then he would have nothing to fear from them; for they would be ſure to ruin themſelves. The liberal preſent, (which ſhe called a bleſſing, being an expreſſion of her good-will to him,) ſhe repreſented as unworthy of his notice; but begged that it might be given to his followers. She profeſſed her firm belief that he, and his family, would be eſtabliſhed in the kingdom: ſhe made honourable mention of his great ſervices to Iſrael, and of his unblameable conduct; and adverted to the injuſtice of Saul's perſecution, whom in honour of his authority, ſhe did not mention. She declared her aſſurance of David's preſervation by a remarkable expreſſion, "that his ſoul ſhould be bound up in the bundle "of life with the Lord his God:" that is, that he was irreverſibly appointed unto the kingdom, and in conſequence was numbered with thoſe, whoſe lives are upheld, and protected againſt all poſſible dangers, by the almighty power of the everlaſting God: and that his ſoul alſo was numbered amongſt thoſe, who were "appointed unto "ſalvation," and would in the ſame manner be preſerved unto eternal life: whilſt his enemies would be driven into deſtruction, as a ſtone is violently thrown from a ſling. In pleading for forgiveneſs ſhe intimated that it would be more honourable to his character, and comfortable to his mind, when the Lord's promiſes were performed, to reflect, that he had maſtered his anger; than that he had avenged himſelf, and ſhed blood without cauſe: and ſhe concluded with begging of him to think of her, and what ſhe had ſaid, when theſe things were come to paſs. Nothing ſeems to have been omitted in this addreſs, which ſuited the occaſion, nothing added unſuitably; all was expreſſed in the moſt perſuaſive manner: and manifeſts Abigail to have been a woman of ſtrong faith, and great piety, as well as poſſeſſed of ſingular prudence and ingenuity, though married to ſo worthleſs a man.

V. 32. *And David ſaid*, &c.] Abigail's ſpeech brought David to view the matter in it's true light, to bleſs God for ſending her, to pray for her, and to thank her for

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Dayes del.

Ingram sc.

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33 And bleſſed *be* thy advice, and bleſſed *be* thou, which haſt kept me this day from coming to *ſhed* blood, and from avenging myſelf with mine own hand.

34 For in very deed, *as* the LORD God of Iſrael liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadſt haſted and come to meet me, ſurely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that piſſeth againſt the wall.

35 So David received of her hand *that* which ſhe had brought him, and ſaid unto her, Go up in peace to thine houſe; ſee, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy perſon.

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feaſt in his houſe like the feaſt of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore ſhe told him nothing, leſs or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to paſs in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him theſe things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a ſtone.

38 And it came to paſs about ten days *after*, that the LORD ſmote Nabal, that he died.

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cauſe of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his ſervant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedneſs of Nabal upon his own head. And David ſent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the ſervants of David were come to Abigail, to Carmel, they ſpake unto her, ſaying, David ſent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And ſhe aroſe, and bowed herſelf on *her* face to the earth, and ſaid, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a ſervant to waſh the feet of the ſervants of my lord.

42 And Abigail haſted, and aroſe, and rode upon an aſs, with five damſels of her's that went after her; and ſhe went after the meſſengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David alſo took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were alſo both of them his wives.

44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the ſon of Laiſh, which *was* of Gallim.

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coming ſo ſpeedily with ſuch ſeaſonable advice, whereby much miſchief, and guilt had been prevented.

V. 34. *Any that*, &c.] This phraſe, though literally tranſlated, being in common uſe amongſt the Iſraelites, had not with them that indelicacy in it that it hath amongſt us, and may in every place, with the utmoſt propriety, be read "every male." Though David only intended the death of the men; yet if Abigail, and the other women eſcaped the maſſacre, they muſt have been greatly injured; therefore the Lord had kept "him back from "hurting her."

V. 37. *His heart died*, &c.] When Nabal heard of the imminent danger, to which his own folly had expoſed him, at the very time, when he was ſtupified with drunkenneſs, and ſurrounded with thoſe, whom he had tempted to the ſame exceſs, his terror, and vexation were ſo great, that they ſunk his ſpirits; and in ten days, by the juſt judgment of God, he ended his life, and left his wealth to others. It ſeems his proviſions were ſo large, his attendants ſo numerous, and his mind ſo diſſipated, that he did not miſs Abigail, or her preſent to David; or the ſervants, who went with her.

V. 39. *Bleſſed be the Lord*, &c.] David bleſſed God that he had been kept from avenging himſelf; and he conſidered the death of Nabal, as a proof of God's ſpecial regard to him, in pleading his cauſe againſt his enemies; as an earneſt of further favours of the ſame kind; and as ſuited to awe others from injuring him.

V. 42. *Became his wife.*] Abigail firmly believed that David would be king over Iſrael, and greatly eſteemed his pious and excellent character: ſhe therefore deemed, the propoſal honourable, and advantageous, notwithſtanding his preſent difficulties; and with great humility, and doubtleſs according to the *decorum* of thoſe times, acceded thereto; being willing to ſhare his trials, and to ſubmit to any ſervices for his ſake.

V. 43, 44.] Probably David had before this married Ahinoam, and as ſoon as Michal was married to Phalti. In this he was carried away with the cuſtom of the times, and was connived at in having more than one wife.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt honoured ſervants of God have the meaſure, and period of their uſefulneſs appointed them: but they are happy, though rejected of men, who perſevere unto the end, walking with God, and living conſiſtent with their profeſſion, even in a retired ſituation. Their unblemiſhed characters, their good examples, and their teſtimony to the truth, will produce ſalutary effects; and their unceaſing prayers will be anſwered in behalf of numbers, after they are removed by death. And indeed whole nations have cauſe to lament when faithful inſtructors, holy men of

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Saul informed about David, and marching againſt him, 1—3. 2d. David, and Abiſhai entering Saul's camp, whilſt he was aſleep, ſparing his life, and taking away his ſpear, &c, from his bolſter, 4—12. 3d. David's reaſonings, and Saul's convictions on this occaſion, 13—25.

AND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, ſaying, Doth not David hide

God, and public interceſſors are taken away. But Jeſus our prophet, prieſt, interceſſor, and judge, ever liveth to take care of thoſe, who truſt in him. Riches make men look great in their own eyes, and in thoſe of other worldly people. But they are often laviſhed on thoſe, who have neither wiſdom, nor grace; and who ſo abuſe them, as to ruin themſelves, and to render many others wretched, or wicked. May we be great in the ſight of the Lord, and not in the opinion of the world! To be deſcended from honourable anceſtors forms one branch of man's little, and fooliſh vanity: yet it frequently is a moſt ſevere reproach to the character, and conduct of many of thoſe, who value themſelves upon it. Perſons of virtue, good ſenſe, and amiable qualifications are often married, for the ſake of wealth, to ſuch unſuitable perſons, as render their whole lives wretched, and expoſed to manifold temptations, as well as diſtreſſes. Let parents, and young perſons guard againſt this fatal miſtake. But prudent and pious relations are an invaluable treaſure, and often retard the ruin of thoſe, who have not ſenſe to know their worth. They, whom the Lord will moſt honour, are often very deſtitute for a ſeaſon; and, as they will not have recourſe to fraud, or violence, they are ſometimes conſtrained to become ſupplicants to ungodly perſons. On ſuch occaſions it behoves them to ſpeak with modeſty of themſelves, and with decent reſpect to thoſe, whoſe aſſiſtance they requeſt, wiſhing the continuance, increaſe, or acceſſion of every bleſſing: but they muſt be careful, or they will verge towards flattery, and paſs ſuch compliments, as conſiſt not with truth, and tend to confirm evil men in their favourable opinion of themſelves, and their ſtate: this they ought by no means to do, though they be cenſured for rudeneſs by neglecting it. Wordly men deem their riches *their own*; but God declares they *are another's*, (*Luke* c. xvi. v. 12,) and that they muſt ſhortly give an account of their ſtewardſhip. When they are determined not to relieve the neceſſitous, they often excuſe themſelves by railing on them, by charging the vices of ſome poor perſons upon them all; and by repreſenting alms-giving as an encouragement to idleneſs, impertinence, and extravagance: nor are the moſt excellent characters any defence againſt ſuch undiſtinguiſhing invectives, which betray the pride, ignorance, malice, and avarice of the heart, from which they proceed. In imitation of the example of the Lord, we are commanded to do good to the evil, and ungrateful; and wretched ſhould we all be, if he dealt with us by ſuch rules, as we are diſpoſed to adopt, in our behaviour to our poor brethren. Whilſt we enjoy the abundance, which God hath given us, we ſhould be liberal to the indigent: but many will laviſh as much upon one *unneceſſary*, *proud*, and *luxurious* feaſt, or upon the exceſſive indulgence of their own appetites, or vanity; as would be deemed an exorbitant ſum to be expended in acts of charity: (*Luke* c. xiv. v. 12—14.) Silence is generally our wiſdom, when aſſaulted by provoking language, or we ſhall be betrayed into folly and ſin: and when the meſſengers of the Son of David meet with abuſe for his ſake, they muſt hold their peace, and report it to their Lord, who will ſurely, and juſtly reſent it. How changeable are the beſt of men! how contrary their conduct in one inſtance, from what might have been expected from another! a ſmall temptation frequently prevails over them, after a greater hath been reſiſted: for when they are off their guard, they are driven away as a thing rolling before the whirlwind. Paſſionate reſolutions, formed without time for reflection, or prayer, are the reſult of ſatan's counſel; and we are at thoſe times capable of imitating the worſt actions of the worſt of men, and of diſregarding all conſequences to our own character, and peace, to the church of God, or to thoſe, who rejoice in being thus emboldened in their impiety! Many ſervants have more wiſdom and grace, than their maſters, and could ſuggeſt to them uſeful hints: but they, who are ſuch ſons of Belial, that a man cannot ſpeak to them, will loſe this advantage, and will not permit any one to extricate them from the dangers, to which their own imprudence expoſes them. General rules of ſubmiſſion to ſuperior relations muſt be interpreted according to circumſtances. In great emergencies the form may be diſpenſed with; and the preſervation of a man's life, or fortune will juſtify a failure in exterior indications of reſpect. It is honourable when others commend thoſe ſervices, of which we ſay nothing: and when it appears, that we had a right to *demand* more, than we *petitioned* for. In urgent caſes diſpatch is as requiſite, as prudence: leſſer intereſts are always to be ſacrificed to preſerve the greater: our property to preſerve our lives; our very lives, for the ſalvation of our ſouls. Reſpect and liberal kindneſs are proper means of averting wrath: but with wiſe, and godly men, right words are moſt forcible. When, in mild language, matters are fairly ſtated, and proper topics are adduced, their judgments, affections, and conſciences are appealed to; and they cannot but be overcome thereby, if they can be prevailed upon to liſten to it. It is degrading to a wiſe man to reſent the affronts of thoſe, who are notoriouſly fooliſh, and abuſive: they act in character, ſo ſhould we: and bleſs God that our enemies are of ſuch a ſtamp: their unmerited reproaches cannot injure our character; nay their unprovoked enmity does us credit. Every ſervant of God ſhould duly eſtimate his own ſituation; what his obligations, profeſſions, and proſpects are; what his ſtation in the church; what his former conduct, and preſent character: that he may with great circumſpection avoid every inconſiſtent word, and action: for according to theſe things, will men's expectations from, and cenſures of us be. And under every temptation we ſhould conſider how the matter will afterwards appear. Patience and forgiveneſs of injuries will never occaſion uneaſy reflections; but revenge will in every caſe be recollected with grief of heart; and if we could but liſten to our prudent and faith-

himſelf

himſelf in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeſhimon?

2 Then Saul aroſe, and went down to the wilderneſs of Ziph, having three thouſand choſen men of Iſrael with him, to ſeek David in the wilderneſs of Ziph.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* before Jeſhimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderneſs, and he ſaw that Saul came after him into the wilderneſs.

4 David therefore ſent out ſpies, and underſtood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 And David aroſe, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the ſon of Ner, the captain of his hoſt: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6 Then anſwered David and ſaid to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, ſaying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abiſhai ſaid, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abiſhai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay ſleeping within the trench, and his ſpear ſtuck in the ground at his bolſter: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then ſaid Abiſhai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me ſmite him, I pray thee, with the ſpear, even to the earth at once, and I will not *ſmite* him the ſecond time.

9 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, Deſtroy him not: for who can ſtretch forth his hand againſt the LORD's anointed, and be guiltleſs?

10 David ſaid furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD ſhall ſmite him; or his day

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ful counſellors at preſent, with the ſame candour, that we ſhall reflect upon their advice in future, we ſhould avoid much ſorrow, and many offences. Happy is the true believer: "his ſoul is bound up in the bundle of life "with the Lord his God! In the midſt of dangers, and enemies, his natural life is perfectly ſafe, till the appointed hour: the life of his ſoul is hid with Chriſt in God; and becauſe the Saviour liveth, he ſhall live alſo; whilſt all his foes ſhall be driven to deſtruction. Our gratitude to God ſhould precede, but not exclude our gratitude to the inſtruments of his goodneſs: and we have peculiar cauſe to be thankful, when we have been kept back from thoſe ſins, which we were ready to commit: and real penitents will not be backward to take ſhame to themſelves, and to retract their raſh expreſſions; and they will tremble to reflect what the conſequences would have been, had they been left to themſelves. God's people need not avenge their own cauſe, for the Lord will ſurely do it for them; and ſometimes more awfully, than they could have wiſhed: yet when his purpoſe is known, they will adore his juſtice, and bleſs him for his kindneſs to them. Whilſt divine vengeance hovers over the heads of ſinners, they are often given up to fooliſh mirth, and brutiſh intoxication. If the proſpect of a violent death be ſo terrifying; how ſhould ſinners tremble at the thoughts of eternal damnation, and flee without delay from the wrath to come! Worldly ſorrow, mortified pride, and an affrighted conſcience ſometimes ſuffice to end the ſenſualiſt's joys, and ſeparate the covetous man from all his wealth: but whatever be the weapon, the Lord ſmites men with death, when it pleaſes him. May we chooſe that good part, which ſhall never be taken from us! Modeſty, prudence, and humility are ordinary preparations to advancement: and a wiſe man will always know the value of a pious and virtuous wife. But ſome deviations from the divine law, and ſome alloy to our comforts, muſt be expected in every character, and every ſituation, on this ſide heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1. *And the Ziphites*, &c.] It ſeems that Saul had dropped the purſuit of David, till excited to it again by the officious information of the Ziphites, who perhaps deſpaired of David's pardon for their former malice and perfidy. Upon which Saul's envy, ambition, and malice revived; like Pharaoh he again hardened his heart and determined to make one more effort to deſtroy his rival.

V. 3. *Abode*, &c.] David neither fled, nor went forth to meet Saul, but kept his poſt, till he ſaw how matters were. Had a much greater army of uncircumciſed Philiſtines marched againſt him, he would have faced them, with his ſmall company, and truſted the Lord for the event: but he would not fight againſt the Lord's anointed.

V. 6. *And Abiſhai ſaid*, &c.] Probably David was determined to this meaſure by a divine impulſe, that all Iſrael might be convinced that he was vilely ſlandered by his enemies. Having therefore in the day time made proper obſervations, he propoſed the matter to two of his attendants: but Ahimelech, who was a Hittite, had not that ſtrength of faith in the God of Iſrael, which ſuch a bold adventure required; and Abiſhai only went with David.

V. 10. *The Lord ſhall*, &c.] As he had ſmitten Nabal. It hath been ſaid that David ſpared Saul, the Lord's anointed, out of policy, that he might not teach the people an evil leſſon againſt himſelf. But it is evident, that he acted from higher motives: the Lord forbad it, and "no "man could ſtretch forth his hand againſt the Lord's "anointed, and be guiltleſs." Satisfied that the Lord would fulfil his promiſe, he determined to wait his time, though he ſeemed awfully convinced that Saul would die impenitent.

ſhall come to die; or he ſhall deſcend into battle, and periſh.

11 The LORD forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth mine hand againſt the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the ſpear that *is* at his bolſter, and the cruſe of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the ſpear and the cruſe of water from Saul's bolſter; and they gat them away, and no man ſaw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all aſleep; becauſe a deep ſleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other ſide, and ſtood on the top of an hill afar off; a great ſpace *being* betwen them:

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the ſon of Ner, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou not, Abner? Then Abner anſwered and ſaid, Who *art* thou *that* crieſt to the king?

15 And David ſaid to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Iſrael? wherefore then haſt thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to deſtroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing *is* not good that thou haſt done. *As* the LORD liveth ye *are* worthy to die, becauſe ye have not kept your maſter, the LORD's anointed. And now ſee where the king's ſpear *is*, and the cruſe of water that *was* at his bolſter.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and ſaid, *Is* this thy voice, my ſon David? And David ſaid, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he ſaid, Wherefore doth my lord thus purſue after his ſervant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his ſervant. If the LORD have ſtirred thee up againſt me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, curſed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, ſaying, Go, ſerve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD; for the king of Iſrael is come out to ſeek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21 Then ſaid Saul, I have ſinned: return, my ſon David: for I will no more do thee harm, becauſe my ſoul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David anſwered and ſaid, Behold the king's ſpear; and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The LORD render to every man his righteouſneſs and his faithfulneſs: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not ſtretch forth mine hand againſt the LORD's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much ſet

V. 16. *Ye are worthy*, &c.] Abner and his ſoldiers, by neglecting to guard Saul, when he ſlept, had expoſed his life, and merited to be treated as his enemies, though he confided in them, as his friends: for though their *ſound* ſleep was ſupernatural; yet there might be a neglect of placing centinels, ariſing from contempt of David's ſmall company: and yet Saul deemed David his enemy; who had ſpared and protected his life, in the moſt friendly manner. This he would have Saul, and all his men to take notice of; that they might be aſhamed of their enterpriſe.

V. 19. *If the Lord*, &c.] David had not offended Saul, but he was a ſinner againſt the Lord: and if he ſhould be convinced that his ſufferings aroſe from that cauſe; he would repent, and offer a ſin-offering, that his ſin being pardoned, his trials might ceaſe: but if it appeared that Saul was inſtigated to this perſecution by the evil ſpirit, which in judgment was permitted to trouble him, he adviſed him to the ſame meaſures. But if wicked men influenced him to it, they might expect ſevere vengeance from God, for thus baniſhing him from the worſhip of Jehovah; and tempting him to turn idolater. It is obſervable that David carefully avoids mentioning Saul's own envy, and malice, which were the real cauſes of his conduct: for he meant not to irritate, but to mollify him.

V. 20. *Let not my*, &c.] Though David was ſo inconſiderable a perſon, according to his modeſt repreſentation of himſelf: yet if his blood were ſhed, the Lord would certainly require it.

V. 21—25.] (*Notes*, &c. c. 24.) This ſecond inſtance of David's fidelity ſeems to have affected Saul more than the former. He confeſſed his guilt and folly in much ſtronger terms, and even invited him to return to court; and he repeated his good words, and wiſhes, and his perſuaſion that he would prevail, and be very eminent. But there were no evidences of true repentance towards God; and David plainly intimated that he would not truſt his promiſes, and expected no recompence from him: but that he referred his cauſe to the Lord, who would protect, deliver, and do him juſtice. Thus they parted to meet no more.

by this day in mine eyes, ſo let my life be much ſet by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul ſaid to David, Bleſſed *be* thou, my ſon David: thou ſhalt both do great *things*, and alſo ſhalt ſtill prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1ſt. David retiring to Gath, favoured by the king, and obtaining Ziklag, 1—7. 2d. His expedition againſt the Geſhurites, &c, and his equivocating anſwer to Achiſh, 1—12.

AND David ſaid in his heart, I ſhall now periſh one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I ſhould ſpeedily eſcape into the land of the Philiſtines; and Saul ſhall deſpair of me, to ſeek me any more in any coaſt of Iſrael: ſo ſhall I eſcape out of his hand.

2 And David aroſe, and he paſſed over with the ſix hundred men that *were* with him unto Achiſh, the ſon of Maoch, king of Gath.

3 And David dwelt with Achiſh at Gath, he and his men, every man with his houſhold, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs, and Abigail the Carmeliteſs, Nabal's wife.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

One crime generally proves a temptation to another; and if ſin be not dethroned by ſanctifying grace, it will recover its ſtrength, when a ſuitable temptation is preſented: and ſatan, and his agents will ſuggeſt ſuch thoughts as may re-kindle the ſmothered flame: thus after deep convictions, and temporary reformations, men return to their ſins, and become worſe than ever. But the ſervants of God ought to perſevere in a blameleſs conduct, however injured; that it may appear that they act from a ſettled purpoſe of doing good for the Lord's ſake: and in ſome caſes, they will need the boldneſs of the lion, the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and the harmleſſneſs of the dove, in order to avoid evil, and the appearance of evil; and yet to uſe proper means of eſcaping the malice of their enemies. Confidence in God fortifies the ſoul againſt temptations to ſeek relief from trouble by ſin: and it requires as much reſolution to reſtrain the exceſſes of mis-judging zealous friends, as to ſtand firm againſt the rage of incenſed enemies. If we would have outward bleſſings with comfort, and reputation, we muſt wait for them in the path of duty: and if wicked men obſtruct the Lord's purpoſes, he can eaſily remove them, without needing our help. We are expoſed to ſo many dangers, whenever we cloſe our eyes, that we ſhould previouſly examine our ſtate, whether we are ready for death; and then commit ourſelves to his keeping, who neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth. Otherwiſe our needful ſleep may confine us, as in a priſon, till ſome murderer, or awful calamity comes upon us, with unexpected deſtruction. The ſuppoſed friends of ungodly men are either incapable of ſerving them, or will treacherouſly neglect, and expoſe them. And the pious people whom they hate and revile, are their only friends, as they perſevere in their prayers for, and kindneſs to them. Good works give energy to perſuaſive words: and whether we plead our own cauſe, or the cauſe of God, an evident integrity, and conſiſtency of conduct will go further in producing conviction, than the utmoſt powers of eloquence: for want of *this confirmation*, much ſound reaſoning, and pathetic exhortation, paſs for unmeaning declamation, and nobody is convinced by them. Man's tranſgreſſions againſt God are the cauſe of their enmities againſt each other; and no reconciliation amongſt men hath an immoveable baſis, which is not founded in, and cemented by peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt. They, who drive us from our duty, or tempt us to ſin, are our worſt enemies: and perſecutors, beſides their murder of men's bodies, muſt give a dreadful account of the murder of their ſouls, whom they have driven to apoſtacy, or to do violence to their own conſciences, by the terrors of impriſonment, or death. In ſinning againſt God men "play the fool exceedingly:" this the believer perceives, repents of, obtains a pardon, and acts more wiſely: many others obtain a tranſient view of theſe mortifying truths, who hate, and cloſe their eyes againſt the light. But eternity will fully diſcover their exceeding fooliſhneſs, and they will never ceaſe to reflect upon their own madneſs, in ſtifling their convictions, and holding faſt their iniquities. No good words, or fair profeſſions entitle thoſe to any confidence, who have long ſinned againſt the light: yet the confeſſions of obſtinate ſinners may be uſeful to us, in ſatisfying us that we are in the right way, and ſhall prevail; and to encourage us to perſevere, expecting our recompence from the Lord alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *I ſhall*, &c.] Whilſt David reflected upon the inveterate malice of Saul, and the neglect or treachery of his countrymen; he ſeems to have forgot his anointing, the promiſe, and command of God, and the manifold deliverances, which he had experienced; and was ready to deſpair of ſafety in the land of Judah: and from this unbelief aroſe many ſins, and temptations. Having perhaps received ſome intimation from Achiſh, that he would protect him, he went thither without enquiring of the Lord: but this was the way to alienate the affections of the Iſraelites, and to give credit to the ſlanders of his accuſers: he thus run himſelf, and his men into temptations to idolatry; and he laid himſelf under obligations to thoſe, whom he could never favour, without betraying the cauſe of God.

V. 3. *Dwelt with*, &c.] Achiſh probably hoped that he ſhould be able to fix David in his intereſts, and employ him againſt the Iſraelites: or that he ſhould thus ſecure an advantageous alliance with him, if ever he came to be king of Iſrael.

V. 4. *It was told Saul*, &c.] Saul does not appear to have been cured of his malice, but the object of it was re-

to

to Gath: and he ſought no more again for him.

5 And David ſaid unto Achiſh, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in ſome town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why ſhould thy ſervant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6 Then Achiſh gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philiſtines was a full year and four months.

8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geſhurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for thoſe *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goeſt to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9 And David ſmote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the ſheep, and the oxen, and the aſſes, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achiſh.

10 And Achiſh ſaid, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David ſaid, Againſt the ſouth of Judah, and againſt the ſouth of the Jerahmeelites, and againſt the ſouth of the Kenites.

11 And David ſaved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, ſaying, Leſt they ſhould tell on us, ſaying, So did David, and ſo *will be* his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philiſtines.

12 And Achiſh believed David, ſaying, He hath made his people Iſrael utterly to abhor him; therefore he ſhall be my ſervant for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Philiſtines preparing war againſt Iſrael, and Achiſh requiring David to aſſiſt him, v. 1, 2—4. 2d. After Samuel's death Saul in vain enquiring of the Lord, and applying to the witch of Endor, v. 3. 5—11. 3d. What paſſed upon this occaſion, and Saul's deſpondency, v. 12—20. 4th. His return to the army, having been prevailed upon to take ſome meat, v. 21—25.

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moved out of his reach. Thus many ſeem reformed, not becauſe they are cured of their love of ſin, but becauſe they have no longer any opportunity of committing it.

V. 5. *In ſome town*, &c.] David wanted to avoid oſtentation, and to eſcape the effects of envy; and perhaps to be out of the way of temptation, more at leiſure for the exerciſes of religion, and more unembarraſſed in his whole conduct, than he could be near the court, and amongſt the nobles of King Achiſh. After the diviſion of the land, the Philiſtines had ſeized Ziklag; but in this manner it came again into the poſſeſſion of the Iſraelites.

V. 8—12.] Probably the Geſhurites, &c, were tribes of the Amalekites, or in alliance with them. We may therefore commend David for attempting to complete the work, which Saul had done by halves; and ſhould not cenſure the ſeverity, with which he conducted the war. Theſe nations lived to the ſouth of Judah; and he made Achiſh to believe that he had been fighting againſt his countrymen: and as intelligence was not then conveyed ſo eaſily, as at preſent, no one undeceived him; and he believed, that David had widened the breach betwixt himſelf and his people, ſo that it could not be healed: had he known the truth, he would have concluded, that David could not be detached from Iſrael, or united to their enemies. David's circumſtances naturally tempted him to this deceit, but it can by no means be juſtified.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſtrongeſt believers cannot wholly exclude the incurſions of unbelief, under tedious trials, and when ſenſe, and reaſon, bring in no report of deliverance: many, under ſharp temptations, have overlooked former mercies, and experiences; forgotten the power, and promiſe of the Lord, and feared that ſin, and ſatan would finally prevail againſt them. When faith thus ſtaggers, obedience wavers, and ſinful expedients obtain the preference; which involve men more and more in difficulties, and temptations When we lean to our own underſtanding, and aſk not counſel of the Lord, we are ſure to do wrong: and we ought not to quit the path of duty, or to join intereſts with God's enemies, even for ſelf-preſervation, or out of care for our families: nor ſhould we willingly contract obligations, where we cannot conſiſtently make requitals of kindneſs. It is our wiſdom to ſhun notoriety, and to ſhelter ourſelves from envy; for obſcurity is commonly more ſafe and comfortable, and no leſs advantageous. But we muſt in no ſituation be wholly inactive, but muſt attempt ſomewhat in the cauſe of God and his people; even though ungratefully requited by thoſe, whom we would ſerve. The fear of man is ſo enſnaring, that we ſhould, if we can, keep out of thoſe places, where doing our duty will expoſe us to danger, or reproach. An equivocation, which ſerves the purpoſes of a lye, bears the ſame relation to it, that a hypocrite doth to a profane perſon: it is only apparently better, and therefore a more dangerous cheat. But though believers often betray their imperfections, they can never be prevailed upon to renounce the ſervice of God, and to unite intereſts with his enemies, or finally to become the ſervants of ſin and ſatan.

And

And Achiſh ſaid unto David, Know thou aſſuredly, that thou ſhalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David ſaid to Achiſh, Surely thou ſhalt know what thy ſervant can do. And Achiſh ſaid to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Iſrael had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away thoſe that had familiar ſpirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philiſtines gathered themſelves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Iſrael together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul ſaw the hoſt of the Philiſtines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD anſwered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7 Then ſaid Saul unto his ſervants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar ſpirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his ſervants ſaid to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar ſpirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul diſguiſed himſelf, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he ſaid, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar ſpirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I ſhall name unto thee.

9 And the woman ſaid unto him, Behold, thou knoweſt what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off thoſe that have familiar ſpirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layeſt thou a ſnare for my life, to cauſe me to die?

10 And Saul ſware to her by the LORD, ſaying, *As* the LORD liveth, there ſhall no puniſhment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then ſaid the woman, Whom ſhall I bring up unto thee? And he ſaid, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman ſaw Samuel, ſhe

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2.] Achiſh required and expected David's aſſiſtance in the war againſt Iſrael, and promiſed him a high preferment in his ſervice, for his recompence: David could not refuſe withoutt he utmoſt danger: if he had promiſed it, and then either ſtood neuter, or gone over to the Iſraelites, he muſt have behaved with great ingratitude and treachery; and if he had fought againſt Iſrael, he would have been guilty of a great ſin, and have alienated the affections of his people, and perhaps have expoſed himſelf to the reproach of having murdered Saul. It ſeemed therefore impoſſible that he could extricate himſelf from this difficulty with a good conſcience, and a clear reputation. His evaſive anſwer, which was intended to gain time, but which Achiſh underſtood as a promiſe of effectual aſſiſtance, was ſcarce conſiſtent with the character of an Iſraelite, in whom there ſhould be no guile.

V. 3. *Now Samuel*, &c.] Perhaps the death of Samuel, and the abſence of David from his people, encouraged the Philiſtines to this war. But Saul had filled up his meaſure of iniquity, and the day was come, when he was to deſcend into battle and periſh. He had put away thoſe, that had familiar ſpirits, &c, from the land; perhaps before the Spirit of the Lord departed from him: perhaps when he was troubled with an evil ſpirit, he charged ſome of them as the cauſe of it: perhaps by his zeal in this reſpect he aimed to atone for his other ſins, that the kingdom might not be taken from him. Whatever was his motive, the thing itſelf was right.

V. 4, 5.] As Shunem, and Gilboa lay far north in the land, either this invaſion was very formidable, or Saul very negligent; or they could not have marched thus far, without being oppoſed. But his terror aroſe chiefly from his guilty conſcience. His contempt of Samuel, his murder of the prieſts, and his malicious perſecution of David, diſmayed his heart upon every recollection, and he foreboded his approaching doom.

V. 6. *Saul enquired*, &c.] Saul's enquiry was the reſult of his terror, without any humiliation for his ſins, or purpoſes of repentance, and therefore the Lord would not give him any anſwer. He did not enquire till his doom was ſealed, (*Prov.* c. i. v. 27, 28;) and then only in an hypocritical manner, (*Ezek.* c. xx. v. 1, 2:) and therefore it was the ſame as not enquiring at all; (1 *Chron.* c. x. v. 14.) After Abiathar fled to David, Saul probably employed ſome other perſon to officiate as High Prieſt: but neither by him, nor any prophet, nor in any other way, could he obtain an anſwer. The ſilence of the Lord proclaimed his deep indignation; and Saul ought the more deeply to have humbled himſelf, and to have perſevered in his applications to him: (*Judges* c. x. v. 10—16.) But he was given up to final impenitency; and therefore in impious defiance of God, he determined to conſult a witch!

V. 7, 8.] Saul imagined that a few ſtill ſecretly practiſed their diabolical arts: but nothing could exceed the preſumption of conſulting thoſe, whom he had, according to God's law, endeavoured to extirpate! And he diſguiſed himſelf, not only leſt the woman ſhould fear to uſe her incantations, if ſhe knew him, but leſt the people ſhould be exaſperated againſt him, if they were acquainted with the infamous tranſaction.

V. 9, 19.] Inſtead of being cut to the heart by the woman's ſuſpicion, which implied the moſt ſevere reproof; Saul profanely ſware by the Lord, that the woman ſhould

to Gath: and he ſought no more again for him.

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V. 8—12.] Probably the Geſhurites, &c, were tribes of the Amalekites, or in alliance with them. We may therefore commend David for attempting to complete the work, which Saul had done by halves; and ſhould not cenſure the ſeverity, with which he conducted the war. Theſe nations lived to the ſouth of Judah; and he made Achiſh to believe that he had been fighting againſt his countrymen: and as intelligence was not then conveyed ſo eaſily, as at preſent, no one undeceived him; and he believed, that David had widened the breach betwixt himſelf and his people, ſo that it could not be healed: had he known the truth, he would have concluded, that David could not be detached from Iſrael, or united to their enemies. David's circumſtances naturally tempted him to this deceit, but it can by no means be juſtified.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſtrongeſt believers cannot wholly exclude the incurſions of unbelief, under tedious trials, and when ſenſe, and reaſon, bring in no report of deliverance: many, under ſharp temptations, have overlooked former mercies, and experiences; forgotten the power, and promiſe of the Lord, and feared that ſin, and ſatan would finally prevail againſt them. When faith thus ſtaggers, obedience wavers, and ſinful expedients obtain the preference; which involve men more and more in difficulties, and temptations When we lean to our own underſtanding, and aſk not counſel of the Lord, we are ſure to do wrong: and we ought not to quit the path of duty, or to join intereſts with God's enemies, even for ſelf-preſervation, or out of care for our families: nor ſhould we willingly contract obligations, where we cannot conſiſtently make requitals of kindneſs. It is our wiſdom to ſhun notoriety, and to ſhelter ourſelves from envy; for obſcurity is commonly more ſafe and comfortable, and no leſs advantageous. But we muſt in no ſituation be wholly inactive, but muſt attempt ſomewhat in the cauſe of God and his people; even though ungratefully requited by thoſe, whom we would ſerve. The fear of man is ſo enſnaring, that we ſhould, if we can, keep out of thoſe places, where doing our duty will expoſe us to danger, or reproach. An equivocation, which ſerves the purpoſes of a lye, bears the ſame relation to it, that a hypocrite doth to a profane perſon: it is only apparently better, and therefore a more dangerous cheat. But though believers often betray their imperfections, they can never be prevailed upon to renounce the ſervice of God, and to unite intereſts with his enemies, or finally to become the ſervants of ſin and ſatan.

And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2.] Achish required and expected David's assistance in the war against Israel, and promised him a high preferment in his service, for his recompence: David could not refuse without the utmost danger: if he had promised it, and then either stood neuter, or gone over to the Israelites, he must have behaved with great ingratitude and treachery; and if he had fought against Israel, he would have been guilty of a great sin, and have alienated the affections of his people, and perhaps have exposed himself to the reproach of having murdered Saul. It seemed therefore impossible that he could extricate himself from this difficulty with a good conscience, and a clear reputation. His evasive answer, which was intended to gain time, but which Achish understood as a promise of effectual assistance, was scarce consistent with the character of an Israelite, in whom there should be no guile.

V. 3. *Now Samuel*, &c.] Perhaps the death of Samuel, and the absence of David from his people, encouraged the Philistines to this war. But Saul had filled up his measure of iniquity, and the day was come, when he was to descend into battle and perish. He had put away those, that had familiar spirits, &c, from the land; perhaps before the Spirit of the Lord departed from him: perhaps when he was troubled with an evil spirit, he charged some of them as the cause of it: perhaps by his zeal in this respect he aimed to atone for his other sins, that the kingdom might not be taken from him. Whatever was his motive, the thing itself was right.

V. 4, 5.] As Shunem, and Gilboa lay far north in the land, either this invasion was very formidable, or Saul very negligent; or they could not have marched thus far, without being opposed. But his terror arose chiefly from his guilty conscience. His contempt of Samuel, his murder of the priests, and his malicious persecution of David, dismayed his heart upon every recollection, and he foreboded his approaching doom.

V. 6. *Saul enquired*, &c.] Saul's enquiry was the result of his terror, without any humiliation for his sins, or purposes of repentance, and therefore the Lord would not give him any answer. He did not enquire till his doom was sealed, (*Prov.* c. i. v. 27, 28;) and then only in an hypocritical manner, (*Ezek.* c. xx. v. 1, 2:) and therefore it was the same as not enquiring at all; (1 *Chron.* c. x. v. 14.) After Abiathar fled to David, Saul probably employed some other person to officiate as High Priest: but neither by him, nor any prophet, nor in any other way, could he obtain an answer. The silence of the Lord proclaimed his deep indignation; and Saul ought the more deeply to have humbled himself, and to have persevered in his applications to him: (*Judges* c. x. v. 10—16.) But he was given up to final impenitency; and therefore in impious defiance of God, he determined to consult a witch!

V. 7, 8.] Saul imagined that a few still secretly practised their diabolical arts: but nothing could exceed the presumption of consulting those, whom he had, according to God's law, endeavoured to extirpate! And he disguised himself, not only lest the woman should fear to use her incantations, if she knew him, but lest the people should be exasperated against him, if they were acquainted with the infamous transaction.

V. 9, 19.] Instead of being cut to the heart by the woman's suspicion, which implied the most severe reproof; Saul profanely sware by the Lord, that the woman should

cried with a loud voice: and the woman ſpake to Saul, ſaying, Why haſt thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king ſaid unto her, Be not afraid: for what ſaweſt thou? And the wowan ſaid unto Saul, I ſaw gods aſcending out of the earth.

14 And he ſaid unto her, what form *is* he of? And ſhe ſaid, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he ſtooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himſelf.

15 And Samuel ſaid to Saul, why haſt thou diſquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul anſwered, I am ſore diſtreſſed: for the Philiſtines make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayeſt make known unto me what I ſhall do.

16 Then ſaid Samuel, wherefore then doſt thou aſk of me, ſeeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the LORD hath done to him as he ſpake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David:

18 Becauſe thou obeyedſt not the voice of the LORD, nor executedſt his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19 Moreover the LORD will alſo deliver Iſrael with thee into the hand of the Philiſtines: and to morrow *ſhalt* thou and thy ſons *be* with me: the LORD alſo ſhall deliver the hoſt of Iſrael into the hand of the Philiſtines.

20 Then Saul fell ſtraightway all along on the earth, and was ſore afraid, becauſe of the words of Samuel: and there was no ſtrength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and ſaw that he was ſore troubled, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou ſpakeſt unto me:

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou alſo unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me ſet a morſel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayeſt have ſtrength, when thou goeſt on thy way.

23 But he refuſed, and ſaid, I will not eat. But his ſervants, together with the woman, compelled him: and he hearkened unto their voice. So he aroſe from the earth, and ſat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the

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not be puniſhed for violating God's expreſs commands. She would underſtand this merely as an engagement not to inform againſt her: but Saul thereby ſware not to do *his duty:* and both of them acted almoſt *atheiſtically*, when one engaged, and the other was ſatisfied with the engagement, that no puniſhment ſhould happen to her, for ſinning againſt God: yet moſt *abſurdly*, as well as *impiouſly*, a ſolemn oath was the ſecurity in ſo vile a buſineſs.

V. 11. *Bring me up Samuel*, &c.] That is the departed ſoul of Samuel, in the form in which he appeared in, when alive. Samuel had anointed Saul, and often counſelled him for his good: and though during the latter part of his life, he had neglected him: yet he was convinced, that it was better with him, when he had regarded his advice; and therefore nothing could now ſerve him, but a conference with the departed prophet: and he was ſo ignorant as to ſuppoſe, that the woman, by means of her familiar ſpirit, could bring him up for that purpoſe, even without the Lord's permiſſion: and ſhe probably expected to impoſe upon her conſulter, by ſome ſatanical apparition.

V. 12—19. *When the woman*, &c.] Her incantations are paſſed over in ſilence. It is much diſputed who it was, that appeared on this occaſion. The whole narrative manifeſts, that it was no human impoſture. Many pious men take it for granted, that it was ſatan, perſonating Samuel, though the text gives no intimations to that effect: and it does not appear reconcileable to the ſimplicity of ſcripture language; nor is it adviſeable to give thoſe men any countenance, who, to ſupport a favourite ſyſtem, put a forced conſtruction upon the words of holy writ, very different to their obvious meaning. And ſcarce any of their interpretations can ſound harſher, than the inſertion in every place, where Samuel was mentioned, "that it "was ſatan, perſonating Samuel!" It is argued that the woman's incantations could have no power over a glorified ſaint: but an evil ſpirit could not come at her call without the Lord's permiſſion; and he might ſee good that one ſhould come from the dead at this time; and though the woman was not the cauſe of Samuel's being ſent, Saul's enquiry might be the occaſion of it: and the word "diſ-"quieted," ſeems to be uſed merely in accommodation to the general notions of mankind on that ſubject: And the woman's ſurpriſe and terror proved, that it was an unuſual and unexpected appearance; and not the ordinary effect of her art: (*Note Exod.* c. vii. v. 12.) It is further urged that the apparition's diſcourſe tended to drive Saul

I SAMUEL. Chap. 28. Verse 14.

Corbould del. Walker sculp.

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house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

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to despair, which is one of satan's temptation's; and that it contained no exhortations to repentance, which were usual with the prophets. But Elijah's message to Ahaziah (2 *Kings*, c. i. v. 6;) Daniel's address to Belshazzar, and even Christ's discourse in the presence of Judas, were equally calculated to drive them to despair; and equally void of exhortations to repent, or proposals of mercy. Saul had despised Samuel's solemn warnings in his life-time; yet now he hoped, as it were in defiance of God, to obtain some counsel, and encouragement from him: and why might not God permit the soul of his departed prophet to appear to Saul, and confirm his former sentence, and denounce his irrevocable doom? It was not beyond the power of God, nor, that I can see, any ways unworthy of him; but rather a declaration of his immutable, and irreversible truth and justice. Satan could not have predicted the several events, (which for ought appears came to pass accordingly,) without being inspired of God to do so, and it would seem to give more countenance to consulting witches: if God, on such an occasion, should inspire satan to prophesy *by them*; than if Samuel were sent with this tremendous message from God, when Saul consulted one of them. Indeed this would operate to discourage such attempts; as the bootless request of the rich man in hell to Abraham is calculated to discourage praying to departed saints. The local situation of departed spirits is so concealed from us, that the circumstance of the spirit apparently arising out of the earth, forms no real objection against its being the soul of Samuel: and the expression, "shalt thou, and thy sons be "with me," means no more, than that they should be in the eternal world; and it was suited to impress the idea of a future state, and determined nothing against the different conditions of the righteous and the wicked therein. Upon the whole, there appears much solemnity in God's for once permitting the soul of a departed prophet to make his appearance, as a witness from heaven; and in sending him to confirm the word, which he spake on earth; thereby evincing, that the words of the prophets would surely take effect; and to sit in judgment upon a proud enemy of God, who foolishly sought encouragement in his impenitency, and by the most atrocious crimes. And this interpretation is certainly more obvious, and suited to the apprehensions of the unlearned reader, and according to the general simplicity of the scriptures: and they should be unanswerable arguments and objections, which should constrain us to suppose, that when the Holy Ghost said Samuel, he meant satan; not speaking by Samuel, as he did by the serpent, and by the demoniacks; but actually counterfeiting his shape, and speaking with his voice, when Samuel himself was in every sense absent from the place. The venerable appearance of Samuel, or somewhat that he uttered, convinced the woman, that it was Saul who consulted her. Saul's bowing down before him, was not an act of religious worship, any more than Abigail's bowing down before David. The answer of Samuel was very suited to his character, and the occasion: in vain was it to consult the servant, when the Lord was become his enemy: the Lord was only doing to Saul, or "for himself," (17,) as he declared he would: and as he knew him to be finally given up, he neither gave him counsel, nor comfort.

V. 25. *Then they rose up*, &c.] Saul, though terrified even to desperation, was not humbled! a miserable state he was indeed reduced to, when the witch was his only comforter! But he confessed not his sins, offered no sacrifices, and presented no supplications, that we find: nor does he seem to have been concerned about his sons, or his people; or to have attempted any escape; but in sullen despair to have rushed upon his doom.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we in the least deviate from the plain path of duty, every circumstance will draw us further aside, and increase our perplexity, and temptation: and needless intimacies with, or obligations to the avowed enemies of the true religion, will reduce us, ere we are aware, to the necessity of being unfaithful to our God, or treacherous, and ungrateful to our benefactors. And we shall scarce ever be able, in such a situation, to open our mouths with that candour, and simplicity, which become Christians. When death hath removed, or persecution hath expelled God's ministers, and servants, a land is deprived of its best defence, and its enemies have their best opportunity of preparing war against it. Hypocrites are frequently very zealous against those crimes, to which they are not tempted, or from which they suffer, or apprehend detriment: and apostates commonly fall into those sins, which they were most earnest in opposing. Ungodly persons fear the reproach of man, or the punishments, denounced by human laws, more than the wrath of God: They do not therefore forsake their sins, but dissemble their real characters, and conceal their conduct; and deem all well if they escape detection: but frequently they are employed to rebuke, or correct each other, either for their present conviction, or their future deeper condemnation. When habits of perjury, or profane swearing have been contracted, the sacred name of God, and the most solemn oaths, are often introduced in the midst of the most horrible wickedness, and made the obligations and encouragements to the most enormous crimes! But the malignity of such impiety cannot be expressed in any language. All real, or pretended witchcraft, &c, is a malicious, or ignorant attempt, to gain intelligence, or assistance from some creature, when it cannot be had, or is not sought from the Lord in the path of duty: and is therefore *essentially* idolatry, and *virtually* the worship of the devil: but of such works of darkness it is best to be totally ignorant. Many, who despise the Lord's servants whilst they live, are so far convinced of their wisdom, and fidelity, that they vainly wish for their counsel, and instruction, in distressing circumstances, after their death. But in that blessed world, to which they are removed, they have done with fear, favour, and affection, and are become more determined than ever in the service, and cause of God: and were they to appear, they would denounce the doom of impenitent sinners with more dread-

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1ſt. David attending Achiſh, and diſapproved by the lords of the Philiſtines, v. 1—5. 2d. Diſmiſſed with credit, and departing with affected reluctancy, v. 6—11.

NOW the Philiſtines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Iſraelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel.

2 And the lords of the Philiſtines paſſed on by hundreds, and by thouſands: but David and his men paſſed on in the rere-ward with Achiſh.

3 Then ſaid the princes of the Philiſtines, What *do* theſe Hebrews *here?* And Achiſh ſaid unto the princes of the Philiſtines, *Is* not this David, the ſervant of Saul the king of Iſrael, which hath been with me theſe days, or theſe years, and I have found no fault in him ſince he fell *unto me* unto this day?

4 And the princes of the Philiſtines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philiſtines ſaid unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou haſt appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, leſt in the battle he be an adverſary to us: for wherewith ſhould he reconcile himſelf unto his maſter? *ſhould it* not *be* with the heads of theſe men?

5 *Is* not this David, of whom they ſang one to another in dances, ſaying, Saul ſlew his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands?

6 Then Achiſh called David, and ſaid unto him, Surely, *as* the LORD liveth, thou haſt been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the hoſt *is* good in my ſight; for I have not found evil in thee ſince the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheleſs the lords favour thee not.

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ful deciſion than ever. Wretched indeed are they, who in great outward diſtreſs can obtain no help or comfort from the Lord! What can they expect either from good or evil men, holy, or unholy ſpirits! Neither the ſervants, nor the enemies of God, can do them any ſervice: and every thing combines to drive them to deſperation. This ſatan labours to effect, and God is ſometimes pleaſed to permit him: nay the very teſtimony of his word, and miniſters, concur in convincing the poor wretch, "that there "remains nothing, but a certain fearful looking for of "judgment, and fiery indignation!" And the remembrance of former crimes, convictions, warnings, and relapſes into ſin, help to aſſure him of the certainty, and juſtice of his doom. Yet all theſe things do not humble, or ſoften him; for it is "impoſſible to renew him to re-"pentance:" and not having "believed Moſes and the "prophets, neither will they be perſuaded though one roſe "from the dead:" but either in ſullen, or in furious deſpair he waits; or meets his doom. In every age God ſets up a few ſuch beacons for a tremendous warning to their fellow-ſinners, not to liſten to temptations, to ſtifle convictions, or deſpiſe the word of God: and to beware of hypocriſy, apoſtacy, procraſtination, or other great wickedneſs: for none are given up of God to this deſperation, who have not provoked him to it by their previous crimes. But whilſt one relenting thought remains no ſinner ſhould ever ſuppoſe himſelf in this caſe. God will not indeed hear the prayer of the unhumbled, and impenitent; and many enquire of him in vain, becauſe they are not in earneſt: when therefore they meet not with encouragement, they detect their own hypocriſy, by giving up their religious duties, plunging again into ſin, and ſeeking help from the world, and the god of this world. But let the diſcouraged enquirer perſevere in knocking at mercy's gate, until it be opened: let him humble himſelf more, and more before God, and determine to live, and die ſupplicating his favour; and he will be ſure at length to ſucceed. Let us all learn "to ſeek the Lord, while he may "be found, and to call upon him, whilſt he is near," and without reſerve to obey his voice, and do his will. Finally though ſubjects ſuffer *with* their wicked governors, and children with their parents; yet it either is *for* their own ſins, or their ſufferings will work for them a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 2. *In the rere-ward*, &c.] Probably David was undetermined how to act on this occaſion, and waited with a ſecret hope, that the Lord would help him out of this difficulty. But he ſeems to have been influenced too much by the fear of man, in ſo readily conſenting to attend Achiſh, when he might have framed very plauſible excuſes, for declining that ſervice: however the Lord was pleaſed to bring him off with credit.

V. 6. *And Achiſh*, &c.] Theſe lords, or princes, poſſeſſed ſo much authority in their own cities, and in the camp, at the head of their troops, and were ſo decided againſt employing David, that Achiſh would not venture their diſpleaſure in retaining him. The high opinion that he had of him, and the confidence which he repoſed in him: and his commendations of him both before his face, and to the lords, would have been honourable, to him; if they had not been *in part*, the effect of deception. When Achiſh ſware by Jehovah, that he did not ſend David away, for any ſuſpicion that he entertained of him, he ſhewed that he had collected ſome notions *at leaſt* concerning the true God, and his worſhip.

7 Wherefore

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou diſpleaſe not the lords of the Philiſtines.

8 And David ſaid unto Achiſh, But what have I done? and what haſt thou found in thy ſervant, ſo long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go to fight againſt the enemies of my lord the king?

9 And Achiſh anſwered and ſaid to David, I know that thou *art* good in my ſight, as an angel of God: notwithſtanding, the princes of the Philiſtines have ſaid, He ſhall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore now riſe up early in the morning, with thy maſter's ſervants that are come with thee: and as ſoon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David and his men roſe up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philiſtines. And the Philiſtines went up to Jezreel.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1ſt. David, and his men, at their return, finding Ziklag taken, and burnt, and their families carried captive by the Amalekites, v. 1—3. 2d. Their grief, and reſentment; David's diſtreſs, enquiry of the Lord, and purſuit of the enemy; v. 4—10. 3d. Their ſurpriſal of them by means of a ſlave, recovering all, and taking much ſpoil; and the manner, in which it was diſpoſed of, v. 11—31.

AND it came to paſs, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the ſouth, and Ziklag, and ſmitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2 And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they ſlew not any, either great or ſmall, but carried *them* away, and went on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* burnt with fire; and their wives, and their ſons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

V. 8. *What have I done*, &c.] David could not but rejoice at this occurrence; and yet he would not have Achiſh think that he did; and therefore he pretended a deſire "to fight with the enemies of my lord the "king:" which words Achiſh would underſtand of the Iſraelites, but which were ambiguous, as ſeveral of his ſpeeches were on this occaſion: ſo hard is it in ſuch circumſtances to avoid all diſingenuity, and flattery, either from fear, or courteſy!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt the preſumptuous ſinner is given up to the effects of his own counſels, and driven headlong to deſtruction: the ſins of the upright ſhall be pardoned; and the Lord will take care both of their peace, and reputation. He ſees many ways of extricating us out of difficulties, when we can perceive no way of eſcape: and whilſt ungodly men are purſuing their own purpoſes, and following their own judgments, he ſecretly influences them to ſuch determinations, as ſubſerve the good of his people, and preſerve them from ſin, and temptation. Reputation, eſteem, and affection frequently become our ſnares: whilſt reproaches, contempt, and injurious ſuſpicions prove beneficial: and the ill uſage of the wicked, by which we are driven from them, is much better for us, than that friendſhip, which draws us amongſt them. When worldly people have no evil thing to ſay of us, but will bear teſtimony to our uprightneſs, we need deſire no more from them: this we ſhould aim at by prudence, meekneſs, and a blameleſs life. But their flattering commendations are almoſt always purchaſed by improper compliances, or ſome meaſure of deception, and may therefore commonly cover a profeſſor of godlineſs with confuſion. It is ſeldom prudent to place great confidence in one, who hath changed ſides; except as the fear of God influences a true convert to conſcientious fidelity. Obſcurity, or the company of thoſe, who are of one heart with us, are generally more ſafe, comfortable, and honourable, than high ſtations in the palaces of the ungodly. And David in the cave was more worthy of our imitation, than when a favourite in the camp of king Achiſh: and he ſcarce ever had a greater deliverance, than when he was diſmiſſed from that enſnaring ſervice.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *On the third day*, &c.] Ziklag ſeems to have been ſituated three days march from the camp of the Philiſtines. David did not receive the news of Saul's death till ſeveral days after he left Achiſh: but we cannot argue any thing from thence concerning the battle not being fought on the morrow, after Saul conſulted the witch of Endor: for they form diſtinct narrations, and no date is fixed to the latter. The Lord had extricated David reputably from his enſnaring ſituation: but he ſeverely rebuked him for his miſconduct, by this calamity, that came upon Ziklag in his abſence. He might reaſonably have expected that the Amalekites would watch their opportunity of retaliating upon him: and his fear of offending Achiſh made him very improvident, in leaving the city, with the women and children in it, without any guard. The Amalekites were wonderfully reſtrained from ſlaying them, after the example which had been ſet them; preferring the profit of enſlaving them, to the pleaſure of revenge: for God intended to rebuke David, but not to permit his family and friends to be deſtroyed.

4 Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 And David was greatly diſtreſſed; for the people ſpake of ſtoning him, becauſe the ſoul of all the people was grieved, every man for his ſons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himſelf in the LORD his God.

7 And David ſaid to Abiathar the prieſt, Ahimelech's ſon. I pray thee bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David enquired at the LORD, ſaying, Shall I purſue after this troop? ſhall I overtake them? And he anſwered him, Purſue; for thou ſhalt ſurely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.

9 So David went, he and the ſix hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Beſor, where thoſe that were left behind ſtayed.

10 But David purſued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were ſo faint that they could not go over the brook Beſor.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two cluſters of raiſins: and when he had eaten, his ſpirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights.

13 And David ſaid unto him, To whom *belongeſt* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he ſaid, I *am* a young man of Egypt, ſervant to an Amalekite; and my maſter left me, becauſe three days agone I fell ſick.

14 We made an invaſion *upon* the ſouth of the Cherethites, and upon *the coaſt* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the ſouth of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

15 And David ſaid unto him, Canſt thou bring me down to this company? And he ſaid, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my maſter, and I will bring thee down to this company.

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* ſpread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, becauſe of all the great ſpoil that they had

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V. 6. *David encouraged*, &c.] David's loſs of his wives and children, the deſolations of the city, the anguiſh of his followers, who, not entirely without reaſon, were enraged againſt him for thus expoſing their families, all tended to enhance his diſtreſs: at the ſame time he muſt conſider all his calamities as reſulting from his unbelief, in leaving the land of Judah, in being ſo much afraid of Achiſh, and in neglecting to conſult the Lord. But in the midſt of all theſe complicated troubles, his ſpirit was ſoon calmed and encouraged: he neither murmured againſt God, nor reſented the rage of his ſoldiers, nor deſpaired of redreſs, nor confided in his own valour, or conduct; "but "he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God:" he meditated upon the divine perfections; upon his promiſes to him; and his paſt experience of his faithfulneſs: and upon the relations, in which the Lord ſtood to him, as his worſhipper and ſervant, who had been enabled to chooſe him, as his ſalvation and portion. Thus he was encouraged to expect forgiveneſs, protection, and help, and a favourable event, notwithſtanding external appearances.

V. 7. *Bring me hither*, &c.] No time was now to be loſt; and as his troubles originated from neglecting to enquire of the Lord, he immediately conſulted him by the High Prieſt: and his anſwer quieted the minds of his followers; and they were willing to march in purſuit of the ravagers.

V. 9, 10. *Thoſe that were left*, &c.] With the fatigue of their former march, continued in this new expedition, and the anguiſh of their ſpirits, they became ſo faint, that they could proceed no further. But though David's ſmall troop was reduced, and he might fear, that the others would be unable to proceed, his faith did not fail "him; for he ſtill encouraged himſelf in the Lord his "God."

V. 11—15.] This ſick ſlave was of ſmall value to his maſter, and was likely to be an incumbrance: the life of a fellow creature was rated at nothing; and therefore he inhumanly left him to periſh: but in the righteous providence of God this cruelty occaſioned the deſtruction of the army: whilſt David's kindneſs to a periſhing ſtranger, and ſlave, was the means of his ſignal ſucceſs, and proved to be the reſult of true policy. This Egyptian, who feared being delivered up to his maſter, as much as death, deemed the oath of an Iſraelite by his God a ſufficient ſecurity for his preſervation.

V. 16. *They were ſpread*, &c.] The Amalekites probably knew that the Iſraelites, and the Philiſtines were engaged in war at a great diſtance; and therefore deeming themſelves ſecure, they very imprudently began to riot on

taken out of the land of the Philiſtines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David ſmote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there eſcaped not a man of them, ſave four hundred young men which rode upon camels, and fled.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David reſcued his two wives.

19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither ſmall nor great, neither ſons nor daughters, neither ſpoil, nor *any* thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before thoſe *other* cattle, and ſaid, This *is* David's ſpoil.

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were ſo faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made alſo to abide at the brook Beſor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he ſaluted them.

22 Then anſwered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of thoſe that went with David, and ſaid, Becauſe they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the ſpoil that we have recovered, ſave to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart.

23 Then ſaid David, Ye ſhall not do ſo, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preſerved us, and delivered the company that came againſt us into our hand.

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, ſo *ſhall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the ſtuff: they ſhall part alike.

25 And it was *ſo* from that day forward, that he made it a ſtatute and an ordinance for Iſrael unto this day.

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he ſent of the ſpoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, ſaying, Behold a preſent for you of the ſpoil of the enemies of the LORD;

27 To *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in ſouth Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir,

28 And to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eſhtemoa,

29 And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Kenites,

30 And to *them* which *were* in Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chor-aſhan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach,

31 And to *them* which *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himſelf and his men were wont to haunt.

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the abundance, which they had taken, without any guards being placed, to give notice of an enemy's approach.

V. 20.] Beſides the cattle, which had been taken from the ſeveral countries, that the Amalekites had ravaged, perhaps David entered their lands, and fetched away their cattle alſo.

V. 22. *The wicked men*, &c.] We hope that many of David's men had profited by his example, and inſtructions: but there were wicked men of Belial amongſt them, who wanted to ſeize the property of their fellow-ſoldiers; becauſe they had not been able to go with them. But David's anſwer was full of piety, equity, and meekneſs, and prevailed againſt their unjuſt propoſals.

V. 26. *To his friends*, &c.] To thoſe who ſecretly favoured and aſſiſted him, when perſecuted by Saul. Theſe preſents not only expreſſed his generoſity; but were the reſult of true policy; and were the firſt fruits of the advantages, they were to expect from his friendſhip. Keilah, and the Ziphites are not mentioned in this liſt. Forgiveneſs, and aſſiſtance *in diſtreſs* are to be ſhewn to enemies: but gratitude *at all times* is due to our friends.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we leave our families, we cannot foreſee what may befal them, or ourſelves, ere we return: we ought therefore to commit ourſelves, and each other to the divine protection, and to render to God unfeigned thanks, when we meet, from time to time, in peace, and ſafety. It is wiſdom at all times to moderate our expectations of earthly comfort, leſt we ſhould, by being too ſanguine, meet with the more diſtreſſing diſappointments. Many of our troubles may be traced from our imprudence; all of them in one way or other, originate from our ſins. Inordinate paſſions blind men's minds: exceſſive fear of one danger, cauſes them to overlook others, ſtill more formidable: and they, who by any means give offence to others, may lay their account with, and ſhould prepare for retaliations. But the Lord reſtrains the rage of the moſt barbarous, and

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. Saul's army routed, his sons slain, and Saul, and his armour-bearer killing themselves, 1—6. *2d. The terror of the Israelites, and the Philistines treatment of the dead bodies of Saul and his sons,* 7—10. *3d. The men of Jabesh Gilead rescuing and burying them,* 11—13.

NOW the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul, and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, Saul's sons.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his

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by letting loose one carnal principle to counteract another, wicked men proceed as far, as his purposes require, and no further: and by various instruments he rebukes, and chastens his offending people, but restrains all from doing them essential detriment. Generous minds are most susceptible of rational affections, and the bravest are not disgraced by mourning the loss, or the sufferings of beloved relations: but all our passions are prone to excess; and unless the fear of God possess our hearts, we shall fret against him under our afflictions, and vent our impatience against the guilty, or innocent occasions of them: and thus our helpers may become our terror, or our destroyers. Conscious guilt, and a sense of the divine displeasure form the keenest aggravations of a believer's distress: yet the very reflection, which pains and humbles his heart, silences the tempest of his passions, and induces hope in God, who chastens, that he may not condemn. The Lord is rich in mercy, and ready to forgive: the greatest sinner, when first he approaches the mercy-seat, in the Redeemer's name, with penitent confessions, and fervent prayers, may be encouraged to expect salvation for his soul, and assistance in all his troubles: but the believer, who hath long trusted in his mercy, chosen him for his portion, walked with him in his ordinances, sought his glory, and experienced his faithfulness, power, and love; notwithstanding his failures, and his conscious unworthiness, may with confidence "encourage himself in the Lord his God," in the most extreme danger and distress. Bitter complaints, and mutual recriminations are of no use in the hour of trouble: we are then called to perform the present duty; and to enquire the Lord's will by searching the Scriptures and prayer: and when our sins are forgiven, and we act by the Lord's direction, we shall soon recover all, and be enriched by our very losses, and trials: and even if our companions cannot, or will not help us, the Lord himself will be for us, "the God of Jacob will be our refuge." Some of those, who are cordially attached to the cause of God, are less capable of hard services, than others: but he mercifully accepts them; and so should their brethren. It is good policy, as well as charity, to relieve the meanest in their distresses; for in some great emergency the Lord may enable them to render us the most important services: but he will certainly punish inhumanity to the poor, and the sick; especially that of masters to their sick, and afflicted servants. The success, and abundance of ungodly men, increasing their presumption, and being spent upon their lusts, frequently accelerates their destruction: and sensual indulgence is a common introduction to weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. In the most favoured companies will be found selfish men, who being ungrateful to God for his kindness, will enrich, or pamper themselves, whilst they leave their more deserving, though less prosperous brethren to starve. But they, who consider the Lord as the giver of their abundance, will dispose of it with equity, and in liberality: they will employ their influence to restrain the injustice of others; and take occasion from evil suggestions to establish useful precedents: and instead of spending their wealth upon their lusts, will share it with their friends, and with the poor. Thus subserving their most important future interests, with the very mammon of unrighteousness. In this manner Jesus divides the spoil of his victories with the meanest of his followers. And though the rebellious are now invited to accept of mercy, and participate his favour: yet if they will not have him to reign over them, they shall receive no benefit from his redemption: the blessings of which will be confined to his friends, who trust in, and love him, and keep his commandments.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *Slew Jonathan*, &c.] Probably Saul never informed his sons of what he had been told concerning his own, and their approaching death; and therefore they were in the army, and slain before his eyes. By this means David's way to the throne was cleared: for if so many Israelites stood up for the rights of Ishbosheth, who was a very insignificant person; many more would have been strenuous for Jonathan. And though *he* would have conceded to David, his brethren and the people would probably have made much opposition to his succession. But the Lord removed him to a better world, that his anointed might be more readily established in the kingdom.

V. 4. *And abuse me*, &c.] Saul, when sore wounded, and unable to resist, or to flee, expressed no concern about his immortal soul; but only desired to be speedily dispatched, that the Philistines might not insult over, and put him to pain. His armour-bearer seems not to have either feared death, or the guilt of murder, or the wrath of God: but he had that reverence for the person of his prince, that he was incapable of lifting up his hand against him: and thus Saul became his own murderer; and his armour-bearer, in a mad, and foolish expression of his respect, and affection, imitated his example. Ahithophel, and Judas the traitor

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armour-bearer would not; for he was ſore afraid: therefore Saul took a ſword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armour-bearer ſaw that Saul was dead, he fell likewiſe upon his ſword, and died with him.

6 So Saul died, and his three ſons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that ſame day together.

7 And when the men of Iſrael that *were* on the other ſide of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, ſaw that the men of Iſrael fled, and that Saul and his ſons were dead, they forſook the cities and fled; and the Philiſtines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to paſs on the morrow, when the Philiſtines came to ſtrip the ſlain, that they found Saul and his three ſons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And they cut off his head, and ſtripped off his armour, and ſent into the land of the Philiſtines round about, to publiſh *it in* the houſe of their idols, and among the people.

10 And they put his armour in the houſe of Aſhtaroth; and they faſtened his body to the wall of Beth-ſhan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead heard of that which the Philiſtines had done to Saul,

12 All the valiant men aroſe, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his ſons, from the wall of Beth-ſhan, and came to Jabeſh, and burnt them there.

13 And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabeſh, and faſted ſeven days.

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likewiſe murdered themſelves; and I recollect not any other inſtances in ſcripture of this practice. And when the characters of the ſcripture ſuicides are conſidered, it confirms the opinion, which hath been advanced of the enormous guilt, and direful conſequences of this crime; (*Note*, *Exod.* c. xx. v. 13.) Men, either madly preſuming upon, or deſpairing of God's mercy, to eſcape temporal ſufferings, or diſgrace, deſpiſe his gift of life, ruſh uncalled unto his tribunal, by an act of direct rebellion againſt his authority, and in proud defiance of his juſtice, with the guilt of all their unrepented crimes upon their heads. Yet ſo exceedingly hath ſatan blinded men's minds, that this worſt of murders, when really *intended*, has been held honourable in many ages, places, and ſituations, and hath often been committed out of vainglory, in imitation of, or from affection to thoſe, who have obtained renown amongſt their fellow-ſinners: by which means force has been added to his temptation. The Jews ſay, that Doeg was Saul's armour-bearer, having been preferred for ſlaying the prieſts of the Lord: if ſo, his death was worthy of his life. Saul's ſons, and ſervants, died in the performance of their duty to him, and to their country: but he, and his armour-bearer, died in direct violation of God's commandment.

V. 7. *On the other ſide*, &c.] That is, the cities, which lay between the field of battle, and the river Jordan. This was the effect of their rejecting the Lord, and his prophet, and demanding a king. (*Hoſea*, c. xiii. v. 10, 11.)

V. 8—10.] The Philiſtines ſent the head of Saul to be faſtened in the temple of Dagon, and his armour in that of Aſhtaroth; (1 *Chron.* c. x. v. 9;) in memorial of their victory, and in honour of their idols: but his body, and thoſe of his ſons, they faſtened to the wall of Beth-ſhan, a city near the field of battle. Thus Saul eſcaped being tortured by them, but ſcarce ever was a dead body more inhumanly abuſed. As by the death of Saul, way was made for David to aſcend the throne, they had no great cauſe to triumph on that account.

V. 11—13.] This conduct of the men of Jabeſh-gilead was a becoming expreſſion of gratitude to Saul, as their deliverer in the beginning of his reign, and a proper rebuke to the barbarity of the Philiſtines: probably they burned the bodies, leſt the Philiſtines ſhould recover, and further abuſe them. They faſted ſeven days until the evening, as a token of their ſorrow, and humiliation under the divine rebuke, and perhaps joined their ſolemn prayers. But there was no general lamentation made for Saul, as there had been for the prophet Samuel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The objects of the divine diſpleaſure are not only wretched themſelves, but the cauſe of calamities to all around them: but though the righteous may be involved with them in temporal troubles, and death; they will be ſeparated from them in the other world, and poſſeſs eternal happineſs, whilſt they ſink into everlaſting miſery: and frequently men's behaviour in the cloſing ſcene of life ſtrongly indicates their ſtate beyond the grave. How ſhould we watch and pray, that we may not be given up to preſumption, or deſpair; but may be enabled patiently to bear the evils of life, and quietly to hope for the ſalvation of the Lord, that ſatan may not tempt us to the horrible ſin of ſelf-murder! It is *comparatively* of little conſequence, in what manner, or with what circumſtances we die, or what is done with our dead bodies: if our ſouls are ſaved, they alſo will be raiſed at laſt incorruptible, and glorious: but to be anxious to avoid pain, or diſgrace from men, and not to fear his wrath, who is able to deſtroy both body, and ſoul in hell, is the extreme of infatuation and impiety: yet even in theſe worthleſs matters ungodly men are often diſappointed of their expectations. Indeed every worldly object, that is inordinately craved, will become our trouble; and the deſire, the poſſeſſion, and the loſs of it will all be ſources of uneaſineſs to us. When inhumanity, and impiety attend proſperity, it will be ſhort-lived: and the

The Second Book of SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

The Second Book of the KINGS.

This book derives its name from Samuel, though he was dead before the commencement of its hiſtory, becauſe he anointed that king, whoſe actions are therein recorded. It opens with David's acceſſion to the throne, his gradual prevalence againſt the houſe of Saul, and his eſtabliſhment in the kingdom; it proceeds to relate his victories over his enemies on every ſide, and enlargement of the poſſeſſion, and advancement of the proſperity of Iſrael; and his reformation of the ſtate of religion amongſt them. But with theſe more pleaſing events are recorded the grievous ſins, which he committed, and the domeſtic, and public calamities, with which he was chaſtiſed. Theſe as a dark cloud cover the latter part of the hiſtory of this book, (which brings us almoſt to the cloſe of his reign of forty years,) yet through all, his character ſhines very bright, in many inſtances, and we learn from another place (1 Chron. c. xxviii. xxix.) that he cloſed his life in a very honourable manner. We ſhall here meet with many things worthy of our imitation; and many that are recorded for our warning: the bias of our fallen nature to ſin, and the efficacy of divine grace in renewing the ſoul to repentance and holineſs, are therein illuſtrated: and ſuch a view is given of the methods of God's providence towards his people, as is ſuited to excite our hopes, and our fears, and to teach us to unite holy joy with watchfulneſs and circumſpection.

Before Chriſt 1055.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. An Amalekite bringing Saul's crown and bracelet to David, informing him of the event of the battle, and aſſerting that he ſlew Saul, v. 1—10. 2d. David's expreſſions of ſorrow, and ordering the meſſenger to be put to death, v. 11—16. 3d. His poetical lamentation for Saul, and Jonathan, v. 17—27.

NOW it came to paſs after the death of Saul, when David was returned from

ſucceſſes of ungodly men are commonly introductions to their misfortunes. It behoves us to ſhew gratitude to our benefactors, even though they be wicked men; and to venture danger, and trouble in doing it: yet how ineffectual is the kindneſs, and reſpect of fellow creatures to thoſe, who are enduring the wrath of God? Whilſt pompous funerals, magnificent monuments, and flattering encomiums combine to honour the memory of ſome illuſtrious deceaſed impenitent ſinner, his poor ſoul is ſuffering the extremeſt miſery, and diſgrace in the regions of darkneſs and deſpair! This alſo is a ſore vanity. May we ſeek and find that honour which cometh from God only!

Before Chriſt 1055.

the ſlaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 It came even to paſs on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and *ſo* it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeiſance.

3 And David ſaid unto him, From whence

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Abode two days*, &c.] David, and his men had returned to Ziklag, and probably were employed in repairing its deſolations, when news was brought him of the death of Saul: he ſeems not to have made any enquiry after the event of the war, though he had ſo many reaſons to be anxious about it. The deciſive blow, which opened his way to the throne, was given about the time, that he had been ſo exceedingly diſtreſſed.

V. 2—10.] As Saul's armour-bearer ſaw that he was dead, before he ſlew himſelf, we may conclude that this man feigned many circumſtances of this ſtory. But happening to paſs by the field of battle, and finding Saul's

cometh

cometh thou? And he said unto him, out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me: and I answered, Here *am* I.

8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me; for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold of his clothes, and rent them, and likewise all the men that *were* with him.

12 And they mourned and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow; behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.)

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of

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dead body, with the insignia of royalty upon him, (adorned with which he had very foolishly gone to battle;) he knew who it was: and by bringing them away he sufficiently proved Saul's death: and therefore he formed his story, and ordered his behaviour in that manner, which he supposed would most ingratiate him with David; of whom he judged according to the selfishness of his own disposition. It is remarkable, that an Amalekite should boast of having slain Saul, who had been rejected for sparing that nation.

V. 13—16.] This man was an Amalekite, and devoted by the Lord to destruction: this sentence David, as the king of Israel after Saul's death, was appointed to put in execution: he had boasted of having killed the king of Israel, and David could not disprove his testimony! and it would have been wrong in David to have shewn any countenance to such a person. By his own confession he deserved to die: and by putting him to death, David solemnly protested that he had no hand in the death of Saul; he warned all others not to expect favour from him by doing violence to any of Saul's family; and he aimed to conciliate their good will, and that of Israel in general.

V. 18.] *Also he bade*, &c.] Perhaps the bow was in disuse amongst the Israelites, which had given the Philistines an advantage: at the time therefore that this poem was inserted in the book of Jasher; (*Note*, *Joshua*, c. x. v. 13:) it was also recorded, that David had given orders to the people to habituate themselves to the use of the bow. Though some understand this expression of some tune, or musical instrument, to which this poem was adapted.

V. 19—27.] This elegy contains little of religion, but is highly poetical; and was intended as a tribute of respect to the memory of Saul, and of affection to that of Jonathan; who perhaps was principally meant by the "Beauty of Israel," being in every respect an ornament to his religion and people. Saul's valour and military renown are celebrated, and his faults are veiled; but nothing is spoken of his piety, or justice. The charge given to every one, not to mention the catastrophe in the cities of the Philistines, lest the enemies of God should rejoice, is very beautiful. The wish that neither rain nor dew might fructify the fields, on which the fatal battle was fought: and that no sacrifices might thence be brought to the altar

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the Philiſtines rejoice, leſt the daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the ſhield of the mighty is vilely caſt away, the ſhield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the ſword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleaſant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were ſwifter than eagles, they were ſtronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Iſrael weep over Saul, who clothed you in ſcarlet with *other* delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midſt of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou waſt* ſlain in thine high places.

26 I am diſtreſſed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleaſant haſt thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, paſſing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed!

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of God; becauſe there the anointed of the Lord had been deprived of his ſhield, and treated as one of the baſeſt of the people, is a ſtrong expreſſion of regret for ſuch an event. The harmony, which generally ſubſiſted betwixt Saul and Jonathan, in warring againſt the enemies of Iſrael; and the impetuoſity, and fury, with which they had together charged, and purſued them, and their falling in the ſame battle, are touched upon, in a very poetical manner. And as Saul had encouraged the manufactures of Iſrael, perhaps had increaſed their wealth, the daughters of Iſrael, as moſt delighted with external embelliſhments, are called upon to lament over their prince. Every thing is mentioned in his commendation, which truth permitted: but Jonathan is named with moſt paſſionate affection; as having fallen upon the high places, where he had often ſucceſsfully diſplayed his valour: and as having ſhewn a ſtrong and faithful affection, in ſuch trying circumſtances, and in ſo diſintereſted a manner, as could not be equalled by any inſtances of conjugal fidelity; or the moſt conſtant love, which hath ſubſiſted betwixt the ſexes. Conſidering therefore how pleaſant his friendſhip had been to him, he could not but be greatly diſtreſſed at his premature death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The deepeſt diſtreſs often immediately precedes the dawning of deliverance: but they, who have committed their concerns to the Lord, will quietly abide his will, and repreſs that eagerneſs, and anxiety, with which others torment themſelves, when they expect important changes. Many ſecretly wiſh for the death of thoſe, who keep them from their honours or eſtates, without excepting their neareſt relations; and inwardly rejoice at thoſe events, for which they *decently appear* to mourn. This is very well known to mercenary men, who form their plans accordingly: and they are apt to conclude that all men are actuated by the ſame ſelfiſh principles. But the grace of God ſubdues this baſe diſpoſition, and forms the mind to a more liberal temper: the true believer doth not allow himſelf to deſire, or to rejoice in the calamity, or death of a rival, or an enemy: much leſs for that of a kind, and ſuperior relation, to whom gratitude and honour are juſtly due: and his mourning will on ſuch occaſions be unfeigned, though moderated by ſubmiſſion to the will of God: he cannot exult in the proſpect of wordly advancement; for he conſiders it, as being entruſted with more talents, ſurrounded by greater temptations, and called to increaſing cares, duties, and burdens. They will therefore be deceived, who court his favour, as ſycophants do that of their ungodly ſuperiors: They will meet with a frown, a rebuke, and perhaps with puniſhment, where they expected a large reward. And ſuch treatment of ſuch mercenary men promiſes an uſeful, and honourable poſſeſſion of worldly pre-eminence. The poor diſtinctions, of which ſinners are vain, only expoſe them to diſtinguiſhed danger, and they are frequently ſeized by ſtrangers, and enemies: however they muſt be left, and they cannot tell who ſhall gather them. The faults of others ſhould not be needleſsly expoſed, and all remembrance of injuries ſhould be buried with the deceaſed, except the glory of God and the benefit of men demand the contrary. And the offices, and rank of diſtinguiſhed perſons are entitled to reſpect, though their characters do not demand our eſteem. Uſeful endowments are conferred on thoſe, who are deſtitute of true piety; and it is in ſome caſes allowable, and decent to give them due commendation; but never to praiſe them for thoſe virtues, which they do not poſſeſs. But holineſs demands our peculiar love, and renders the ſociety of others very pleaſant to the true believer: and nothing elſe will avail any man in another world. Next to the love, which ſubſiſts betwixt the Lord, and his people, that endeared affection, which ſprings from it, produces the moſt vigorous, durable, faithful, and diſintereſted friendſhip: yet even this heavenly love occaſions deep diſtreſs *in this world, in which it is an exotic*; but in its own climate above, it will flouriſh into unalloyed, and eternal pleaſure. The calamities of the Lord's people, and the triumphs of his enemies will always grieve the hearts of true believers, whatever advantages they may incidentally obtain by them: and it would be well, if many things, which continually occur amongſt profeſſors, could be concealed from infidels, and profligates, who are exceedingly hardened, and emboldened by them. But it is not enough to conceal; we muſt watch and pray againſt ſuch offences. Let us then learn to repreſs our ambition, reſentment, and ſelf-love, and to exerciſe patience, meekneſs, gratitude to our benefactors, love to our country, and zeal for the glory of God, and for the intereſts of true religion.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1st. David directed of God to remove to Hebron, anointed king by the men of Judah, and thanking the men of Jabesh-gilead for burying Saul, &c, v. 1—7. 2d. Abner setting up Ish-bosheth, and the men of Israel following him, v. 8—11. 3d. Abner beginning a civil war; met by Joab, David's general; a fatal conflict betwixt twelve men, on a side; a battle favourable to David, but stayed by Joab, and marked by the death of his brother Asahel, v. 12—32.

AND it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, unto Hebron.

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite.

3 And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

8 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim:

9 And he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *After this*, &c.] After the death of Saul many of the Israelites resorted to David at Ziklag, till his forces were very considerable; (1 *Chron.* c. xii. v. 22:) but he did not take any step to obtain possession of the vacant throne, without consulting the Lord: he trusted in God, who had promised him the kingdom, to give him it, in his own time, and manner; that he might possess it with a clear conscience, and avoid all appearance of those evils, with which he knew Saul's adherents would be ready to charge him. Accordingly he was directed to go up to Hebron, a chief city of Judah.

V. 4. *They anointed*, &c.] By this ceremony, they accepted David, as the Lord's anointed, to be their king; they did not prescribe to the other tribes, but anointed him only over the house of Judah.

V. 5—7.] David took every opportunity of expressing the same regard to Saul, as he had done in his life time. But he, and three of his sons were now dead; and all Israel knew that his family had been rejected by the Lord, who had ordered David to be anointed as his successor: the tribe of Judah had recognized his title, and it was proper that he should act as king: and he could not begin his reign by a more conciliating measure, than by sending a deputation to thank those, who had rescued, and performed the funeral ceremonies, over the bodies of Saul, and his sons: and he not only besought the Lord to reward them for that good work, but promised, that he also would requite them; being determined to shew all kindness to the friends of his predecessor: and he also encouraged them to expect his firm support against the Philistines and other enemies.

V. 8. *Abner*, &c.] Abner was a near relation of Saul; (1 *Sam.* c. ix. v. 1. c. xiv. v. 50, 51. 1 *Chron.* c. viii. v. 33. c. ix. v. 39;) and Ish-bosheth seems to have been an insignificant person: Abner therefore probably intended to give him only the title of king, and hoped to possess the authority himself. Yet he was conscious that, in so doing, he was opposing the purpose of God.

V. 9. *Over all Israel.*] The nation in general had rejected the judges, whom God had raised up for them, and had demanded a king: in continuation of the same, rebellion, they refused the person, whom the Lord had selected for them, though a man of approved abilities, and character; and preferred the surviving son of their rejected king, though in every respect, an improper person. By these means the Lord trained up his servant for future honour, and usefulness; and he took occasion to manifest the tendency of true godliness, in his behaviour, when passing through these various difficulties. In this David was a type of Christ, whom Israel would not submit to, though anointed of the Father to be a Prince and Saviour to them.

V. 10. *Two years*, &c.] That is, before any remarkable events took place; for David did not reign over all Israel, till the expiration of seven years. During two years, he attempted nothing hostile against Ish-bosheth, or to

reigned two years: but the houſe of Judah followed David.

11 (And the time that David was king in Hebron over the houſe of Judah was ſeven years and ſix months.)

12 And Abner the ſon of Ner, and the ſervants of Iſh-boſheth the ſon of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

13 And Joab the ſon of Zeruiah, and the ſervants of David went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they ſat down, the one on the one ſide of the pool, and the other on the other ſide of the pool.

14 And Abner ſaid to Joab, Let the young men now ariſe, and play before us. And Joab ſaid, Let them ariſe.

15 Then there aroſe and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Iſh-boſheth the ſon of Saul, and twelve of the ſervants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thruſt* his ſword in his fellow's ſide; ſo they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon.

17 And there was a very ſore battle that day: and Abner was beaten, and the men of Iſrael, before the ſervants of David.

18 And there were three ſons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abiſhai, and Aſahel: and Aſahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe.

19 And Aſahel purſued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left, from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and ſaid, *Art* thou Aſahel? And he anſwered, I *am*.

21 And Abner ſaid to him, Turn thee aſide to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Aſahel would not turn aſide from following of him.

22 And Abner ſaid again to Aſahel, Turn thee aſide from following me: wherefore ſhould I ſmite thee to the ground? how then ſhould I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

23 Howbeit, he refuſed to turn aſide: wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the ſpear, ſmote him under the fifth *rib*, that the ſpear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the ſame place: and it came to paſs, *that* as many as came to the place where Aſahel fell down and died, ſtood ſtill.

24 Joab alſo and Abiſhai purſued after Abner: and the ſun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah, by the way of the wilderneſs of Gibeon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themſelves together after Abner, and became one troop, and ſtood on the top of an hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and ſaid,

ſubject Iſrael; and peace might have ſtill ſubſiſted, had not Abner commenced a war. However David was no ſubject to Iſh-boſheth, but the appointed king of Iſrael, and therefore he was not bound to confine himſelf to the ſame meaſures of ſelf-defence, as when he was perſecuted by "the Lord's anointed."

V. 12. *From Mahanaim*, &c.] This was eaſt of Jordan, where Abner had fixed the ſeat of Iſhboſheth's kingdom, as more ſecure from the Philiſtines, and from David. Thence Abner marched his army over Jordan, unto Gibeon, in the tribe of Benjamin, expecting to be effectually ſupported, in ſubjecting the tribe of Judah alſo. To him David oppoſed an army under the command of Joab his ſiſter's ſon: and to the inſtructions given him we ought to aſcribe the moderation, with which he conducted this war.

V. 14. *Let the young men*, &c.] It is probable that Joab kept upon the defenſive, and did not give Abner an opportunity of attacking him: and that Abner's impatience to engage induced him to give this challenge. He expreſſed himſelf, as if he only intended to make diverſion for the two armies, according to the horrible cuſtom of gladiators, who gratified the diabolical ſpectators by murdering each other. Joab, though backward to engage, had not reſolution to refuſe the challenge. Helkath Hazzurim ſignifies "the field of ſtrong men."

V. 18—23.] Theſe circumſtances were recorded to ſhew that Abner was not to blame in the death of Aſahel: for he was conſtrained to ſlay him in his own defence: for nothing could ſatisfy Aſahel, but either killing or taking captive the commander of the oppoſite army; for which he was incompetent.

V. 26. *Shall the ſword*, &c.] Abner uſed very different language, when he was worſted in battle, than when eager to engage: now, he ſpake "of the ſword devouring "for ever," and of the bitterneſs which it would occaſion in the event; before he ſpake of it as a kind of diverſion. But he forgot himſelf, when he threw the blame upon Joab; and he would not have made ſo moderate an uſe of his advantage, had victory inclined to his ſide. But

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Shall the ſword devour for ever? knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end? how long ſhall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

27 And Joab ſaid, *As* God liveth, unleſs thou hadſt ſpoken, ſurely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people ſtood ſtill, and purſued after Iſrael no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and paſſed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's ſervants nineteen men and Aſahel.

31 But the ſervants of David had ſmitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *ſo that* three hundred and threeſcore men died.

32 And they took up Aſahel, and buried him in the ſepulchre of his father, which *was* in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

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though Joab was exaſperated by the death of his brother, yet in regard to David's inclinations, and Iſrael's advantage, he ſtopped the purſuit, and gave Abner and his troops an opportunity of retiring to a place of ſafety.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would poſſeſs temporal things with a bleſſing, we muſt not eagerly ſeize upon them: we muſt not be determined by favourable providences, or carnal counſellors: but we muſt obſerve the rules of God's word, and pray for his direction; uſing thoſe means, and thoſe only, which he hath appointed, or allowed; avoiding all evil, and appearance of evil, in our purſuit of them; and thus receiving them in that meaſure, that the Lord is pleaſed to communicate: whatever elſe we thus miſs of, we ſhall certainly be directed in the way to the kingdom of heaven. They, who have ſhared our afflictions, ſhould be aſſociated in our proſperity; for they, who ſuffer with Chriſt, ſhall alſo reign with him. When we are influenced by faith, fear, and love of God; and act with integrity, kindneſs, forgiveneſs, and a deſire of peace, and purity amongſt men, we ſhall conduct our affairs with the beſt wiſdom. We are bound to pray for, and do good to thoſe, who have acted properly, even to our enemies; and to uſe conciliatory meaſures towards all men; but eſpecially ſuch, who have behaved with gratitude, and fidelity, in dangerous circumſtances, and without proſpect of advantage; for ſuch friends are worthy of attention: and they, who have been grateful to one benefactor, will find others to protect them, when he is removed. But the believer's progreſs muſt be gradual; his faith, and graces muſt be exerciſed, and proved, and his pride ſubdued, before he can properly endure any kind of proſperity: and for theſe purpoſes, the Lord employs the perverſeneſs of our brethren, without their knowledge, or intention. In the profeſſing church few honour thoſe, whom the Lord will honour: before Jeſus came, and in every generation ſince, the very builders have rejected thoſe, whom the Lord intended for eminent ſituations in the ſpiritual building; and Chriſt's ſervants muſt be conformed to him. Ambition, jealouſy, envy, or other evil paſſions, cauſe men to rebel againſt the word of God: but they generally attempt to conceal their real motives under plauſible pretences: however the believer's wiſdom conſiſts in waiting quietly, and ſilently under injuries, and in leaving the Lord to plead his cauſe; except it be evidently his duty to be active. But there is a reſpect due to ſuperior relations, which equals or inferiors in ſimilar circumſtances are not entitled to. Ambitious, and bloody men often conſider the trade of war, and the ſlaughter of their fellow-creatures as a mere diverſion; and the lives of millions have been trifled away, out of a ridiculous point of honour, to the great gratification of ſatan, that firſt great murderer of the bodies, and ſouls of men. From age to age numbers are ambitious of venturing their lives, and ſouls, for the empty hope of being celebrated as valiant men, after they are dead; and from the ſame motive they mingle the blood of their brethren with their own; though they bear them no reſentment, and have received no provocation from them: but what can be more irrational, and infatuated than ſuch a conduct! The ſword of civil war, when once unſheathed, is not eaſily returned into the ſcabbard: and they, who in their eagerneſs to engage, have made the lighteſt of ſuch unnatural conteſts, will perceive in the event, that they are bitterneſs to all parties concerned. Men are greatly diſpoſed to throw the blame of manifeſt evil upon others, that they may exculpate themſelves: and thoſe arguments, which were diſregarded as futile, when they made againſt them, will be deemed very concluſive, when urged on their own behalf. Succeſs, as well as ſelf-love, has great effect in determining men's judgments: of the evil of proſperous attempts they cannot be convinced; yet they can eaſily perceive that to be wrong, which occaſions loſs, or peril to themſelves. But though ſuch partial deciſions ſhould be expoſed, and rebuked; it is always right to exerciſe clemency to the vanquiſhed, and generoſity to the wretched; to ſpare the ſhedding of human blood, and to alleviate the ſum of human miſery: and to ſtrive for peace, eſpecially in thoſe inteſtine contentions in nations or churches, wherein the common cauſe muſt ſuffer, which party ſoever acquires the aſcendancy. Men's different endowments qualify them for varied kinds of ſervice; and ſhould be improved for that purpoſe. But when talents are over-rated, and men confide, and glory in them, they will go out of the line of duty, in order to diſtinguiſh themſelves; they will deſpiſe warnings and counſel, as the effect of envy, or cowardice;

CHAP III.

Contains, 1ſt. The prevalence of David's cauſe, and the increaſe of his family, v. 1—5. 2d. Abner quarrelling with Iſh-boſheth, and treating with David, and with the people, about David's reigning over all Iſrael; and David demanding, and receiving back Michal, v. 6—21. 3d. Joab's inſolence to David, and his murder of Abner, v. 22—27. 4d. David's reſentment, lamentations, and honourable interment of Abner: and Joab's impunity for the preſent, v. 28—39.

NOW there was long war between the houſe of Saul and the houſe of David: but David waxed ſtronger and ſtronger, and the houſe of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 And unto David were ſons born in Hebron: and his firſt born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs;

3 And his ſecond, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Abſalom the ſon of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geſhur;

4 And the fourth Adonijah the ſon of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the ſon of Abital;

5 And the ſixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. Theſe were born to David in Hebron.

6 And it came to paſs, while there was war between the houſe of Saul and the houſe of David, that Abner made himſelf ſtrong for the houſe of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whoſe name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Iſh-boſheth* ſaid to Abner, Wherefore haſt thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Iſhboſheth, and ſaid, *Am* I a dog's head, which againſt Judah do ſhew kindneſs this day unto the houſe of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargeſt me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

9 So do God to Abner, and more alſo, except as the LORD hath ſworn to David, even ſo I do to him;

10 To tranſlate the kingdom from the houſe of Saul, and to ſet up the throne of David over Iſrael and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-ſheba.

11 And he could not anſwer Abner a word again, becauſe he feared him.

12 And Abner ſent meſſengers to David on his behalf, ſaying, Whoſe *is* the land? ſaying *alſo*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *ſhall be* with thee, to bring about all Iſrael unto thee.

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and they will always be ſhamed, and frequently ruined, by theſe qualifications, in which they prided themſelves. Often do men fancy themſelves about to ſeize upon ideal happineſs, when death ſtops their career, and lays them in the duſt: and if they will ruſh forwards in the road to deſtruction, though plainly warned of their danger, they need blame none but themſelves. Finally, there are many diſtinctions amongſt men, both during life, and in the diſpoſal of their bodies after death: but in the eternal world no other diſtinction ſubſiſts, except betwixt thoſe, "who "have ſerved the Lord, and thoſe, who have not ſerved him."

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. *Now there was*, &c.] The civil war continued about five years, and a half: but it ſeems to have been conducted with great moderation on the part of David. However he gained continually upon the eſteem and affections of the people, and in the extent of his dominions, and the number of his ſubjects; whilſt Iſh-boſheth gradually ſunk into inſignificancy, and contempt. Thus Chriſt waits till his people are made willing to be his ſervants, and to claim his protection.

V. 2—5.] David's motives for multiplying his wives were of a carnal nature, whatever they were; and it proved the occaſion of much ſin, and trouble afterwards. By them all he had but ſix ſons all the time, that he reigned at Hebron; though probably he had ſome daughters, who are not mentioned. Perhaps Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, had been taken priſoner, and proſelyted, before David married her.

V. 6—10.] Perhaps Abner was weary of Iſh-boſheth's unſucceſsful cauſe, and was glad of an occaſion of ſecuring preferment in David's ſervice. He was moſt likely guilty of the crime charged upon him, which was conſidered as a claim to the kingdom of a deceaſed prince (c. xii. v. 8. c. xvi. v. 21—23. 1 *Kings*, c. ii. v. 22). Yet Iſh-boſheth was very imprudent to mention it, being entirely dependant upon Abner; whoſe pride diſdained to be called to an account, after all his boaſted ſervices to the houſe of Saul, whom he had ſupported not only againſt the houſe of Judah, but againſt the oath of God, and the convictions of his own conſcience. Indeed ambition, and not regard to Iſh-boſheth, had hitherto induced him to ſupport his intereſt: and revenge and policy, not regard to the will of God, prevailed with him at this time to join David's party.

V. 12. *Whoſe is the land*, &c.] Abner by this expreſſion inſinuated, that he poſſeſſed the authority, and not Iſh-boſheth: if therefore David would grant him advantageous terms, he would put him in poſſeſſion of the whole land.

13 And

13 And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you:

18 Now then *do it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

19 And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron, all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner, and the men that were with him, a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 And, behold the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee: why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know

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V. 13. *Well; I will*, &c.] David knew that the kingdom was his in the purpose of God: and it was desirable to sheath the sword of civil war, and to unite all Israel voluntarily under one king: and he was not the judge of, or accountable for Abner's secret motives; and doubtless he meant to grant Ish-bosheth very favourable terms, if his purposes had not been prevented.

V. 14—16.] Had David divorced Michal, and she had been married to another, he might not have received her again: but the separation was violent on both sides; and probably her marriage to Phaltiel was a force upon her inclinations: Phaltiel was very criminal in taking another man's wife, whatever affection he had for her. David made this demand, perhaps out of affection for Michal; or to strengthen his interests by asserting, and shewing the value, which he put upon his affinity with the house of Saul; or to shew his regard for the law of God, and to rebuke a man, who so openly violated it. As Abner did not deem it politic at that juncture, to take Michal from Phaltiel, he applied to Ishbosheth, who complied with his demand; perhaps being willing to be upon amicable terms with him, as he could not overcome him by arms.

V. 22. *From pursuing a troop*, &c.] Of Philistines, or other enemies, not of Ish-bosheth's forces.

V. 24, 25.] Joab, and his brother Abishai, had been very faithful, and useful to David, in his afflictions: and in gratitude, natural affection, and the love of peace, he had inadvertently given them almost as great an ascendancy over him, as Abner had over Ish-bosheth: he trusted in, and feared them too much, and allowed them all the importance, that they claimed. But if he could not prevent their obtaining an undue influence before he came to the kingdom; he should afterwards have ventured all consequences, in checking their presumption, and exerting the authority, which God had committed to him: trusting in his help he need neither have feared the revolt of Joab, or cared about his support, and services. Nothing can be more affronting than this address of Joab to his prince, whom he grossly charged with the most egregious folly, and then left his presence without waiting for an answer. But it was the language of envy, and ambition, as well as of resentment: he supposed that he had missed an opportunity of avenging the death of Asahel; and he feared a formidable rival, if Abner made a league with David.

V. 25, 26.] Joab seems to have recalled Abner in David's name, without his knowledge; which was base treatment of him, as well as of Abner, as if he would bring him under suspicion of conniving at the murder: and when Abner, imprudently indeed, but in confidence, stepped aside to confer with him, as the officer of David, he treacherously assassinated him, in violation of every law of hospitality, or public faith: Abishai also was privy to, and

thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doeſt.

26 And when Joab was come out from David, he ſent meſſengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David knew *it* not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aſide in the gate to ſpeak with him quietly, and ſmote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Aſahel his brother.

28 And afterward when David heard *it*, he ſaid, I and my kingdom *are* guiltleſs before the LORD for ever, from the blood of Abner the ſon of Ner.

29 Let it reſt on the head of Joab, and on all his father's houſe; and let there not fail from the houſe of Joab one that hath an iſſue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a ſtaff, or that falleth on the ſword, or that lacketh bread.

30 So Joab and Abiſhai his brother ſlew Abner, becauſe he had ſlain their brother Aſahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David ſaid to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with ſackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himſelf* followed the bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and ſaid, Died Abner as a fool dieth?

34 Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, *ſo* felleſt thou. And all the people wept again over him.

35 And when all the people came to cauſe David to eat meat while it was yet day, David ſware, ſaying, So do God to me and more alſo, if I taſte bread, or ought elſe, till the ſun be down.

36 And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleaſed them: as whatſoever the king did pleaſed all the people.

37 For all the people, and all Iſrael, underſtood that day, that it was not of the king to ſlay Abner the ſon of Ner.

38 And the king ſaid unto his ſervants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Iſrael?

39 And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king, and theſe men the ſons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD ſhall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedneſs.

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concerned in the baſe tranſaction, (v. 30.) But, notwithſtanding Joab's guilt, Abner was juſtly puniſhed for pertinaciouſly oppoſing the known will of God; and he was thrown aſide, as unworthy to raiſe David to the throne, or to give peace to Iſrael: and probably had he lived his ambition, influence, and ungodlineſs would have occaſioned further miſchiefs to all parties.

V. 28, 29.] David meant by theſe proteſtations, and imprecations upon Joab, and his family, to wipe off all ſuſpicion of his own guilt, and to remove it from the land: being afraid of a revolt of the ſoldiers, if he offered to execute vengeance on the murderer. But he ſhould have remembered, that He, who ſtilleth the raging of the ſea, is able to ſtill the madneſs of the people. In ſo juſt a cauſe he might, and ought to have riſqued all conſequences: he was anointed king to adminiſter juſtice without reſpect of perſons; and he might have been aſſured of the Lord's ſupport in doing ſo important a duty; the example would have been very ſalutary; all impartial perſons would have applauded his firmneſs; perhaps Iſh-boſheth's murder would have been prevented, and many other crimes, and calamities, in the latter part of his reign: but his fear of man overcame his faith in God, and Joab continued, and increaſed in authority, and in crimes, to the end of David's life: but he was at length called to account. Thus the Son of David long delays, but never fails to puniſh impenitent ſinners.

V. 31. *To Joab*, &c.] Joab was conſtrained to do penance, ſo to ſpeak, by appearing as a mourner for Abner: but as his revenge was gratified, his rival removed, and no heavier puniſhment inflicted, he would have little objection to ſuch a ceremonial.

V. 33. *Died Abner*, &c?] Abner did not die as criminals do, who are bound, fettered, put to ſhame, and executed for their offences; nor as a coward fleeing from, or taken priſoner by the enemy; nor as a raſh man, who had needleſsly run himſelf into danger: but as an honeſt man, who is unexpectedly ſet upon by ruffians, and murdered. It would be very mortifying to Joab, to be thus publicly reproached as an aſſaſſin. The ſatisfaction of the people in the king's behaviour on this occaſion ſhews, that he might ſafely have proceeded to puniſh the criminal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The power, and policy of ſatan, and of wicked men may ſtruggle againſt the purpoſes of God, and the cauſe of his anointed king, and may *ſeem* to occaſion delays: but his intereſt is gaining ground, though by imperceptible degrees, and his glory will ere long be diſplayed throughout the earth. When he hath ſet up his kingdom in any heart,

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1*ſt. Iſhboſheth murdered by two of his ſervants, who brought his head to David; with ſome account of Mephiboſheth,* 1—8. 2*d. David ordering the murderers to be put to death,* 9—12.

AND when Saul's ſon heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Iſraelites were troubled.

2 And Saul's ſon had two men *that were* captains of bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the ſons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth alſo was reckoned to Benjamin:

3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were ſojourners there until this day.)

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inbred luſts, and outward temptations will powerfully oppoſe: but grace ſhall gather ſtrength, and every corruption be weakened continually in the conflict, till the believer be at length ſanctified wholly in body, ſoul, and ſpirit. Inconſtancy muſt he incident to ſelfiſh men: if their avarice or ambition meet with diſappointment in one courſe, they will turn into another; and ſometimes pretenſions to religion ſeem the readieſt way to the gratification of their worldly luſts. Many are not above committing very baſe crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the ſuſpicion of being guilty: and whilſt men go on in their ſins apparently without concern, they are often conſcious that they are fighting againſt God. Little confidence can be placed in thoſe who affront their Maker, betray their country, or deceive thoſe, who confide in them, under the pretence of ſerving their friends: moſt certainly they mean to ſerve their own purpoſes; and will betray them alſo, when they can obtain advantageous terms for doing it. Yet even by thoſe who are actuated by revenge, ambition, luſt, or avarice, the Lord ſecretly ſubſerves his own deſigns: but as they intend not to honour him, whatever they profeſs; ſo when his ends are anſwered, he will throw them aſide with contempt. In ſome caſes, and for ſome purpoſes, we too may uſe their help, without enquiring about their motives, but it will require great caution, and wiſdom, or we ſhall not eſcape guilt, or reproach. The re-union of near relatives, who have been involuntarily ſeparated, is right in itſelf, and it is always our duty to expreſs our regard for the divine law, and to bear teſtimony againſt ſin: and no affection is amiable or allowable, which is not regulated according to the word of God. The bulk of mankind in all ages are turned about by thoſe, who rule, or teach them: or by thoſe, who poſſeſs influence over them, or addreſs their paſſions by eloquence, or flattery: but let us ſeek for a ſound judgment, a good conſcience, and an upright heart; that we may know, and adhere to the truth, and will of God amidſt all changes, and notwithſtanding all deluſions; which ſucceed each other in the world, juſt as the faſhions vary. They, who have deceived others, ſhould endeavour to undeceive them: but good words will do but little, ſo long as a man continues the ſlave of his luſts. In cultivating Chriſtian tempers, and performing relative duties, extremes, and counterfeits muſt be guarded againſt: as zeal, and boldneſs may be furious, and contentious; ſo meekneſs, and the love of peace may degenerate into imbecillity, and irreſolution: and through undue aſcendancy of thoſe inferiors, who ought to be kept in ſubjection with all gravity, ſhameful things will often be done, or connived at, to the cenſure of individuals, and the reproach of the common cauſe. Every one therefore ſhould know his own place, and it's duties, and exerciſe the Chriſtian tempers *in doing them*, not make them an excuſe for neglecting his proper work. Proud men rate their ſervices ſo high, and are ſo regardleſs of relative duties, and of decorum, that it is not deſirable to be under obligations to them: however we ſhould endeavour to receive every thing from God, and conſider every man as a channel, through which the gift is communicated; of whom there is indeed no real neceſſity, on whom we ſhould reſt no dependance, and to whom that gratitude is due, and that alone, which conſiſts with every other duty. They who cannot brook an affront, or a rival; and who deem themſelves too powerful for human juſtice, have little to reſtrain them from the commiſſion of the moſt horrid crimes: and the human heart is capable of making the higheſt profeſſions of friendſhip ſubſervient to the moſt cruel murders; and of violating every ſacred tye. It is not enough for thoſe, who are veſted with authority, to expreſs their abhorrence of ſuch crimes, and criminals, or their compaſſion for thoſe, who ſuffer by them: but all partialities, and intereſted conſiderations ſhould be laid aſide, and condign puniſhment inflicted, that others may hear, and fear, and do no more ſuch wickedneſs: and in every ſtate the executive authority ſhould poſſeſs power ſufficient to puniſh the proudeſt ſubject; leſt blood be imputed to the land. As our lives are ſo expoſed on every ſide, and as he moſt *emphatically* dieth as a fool, who dieth in his ſins, we ſhould be careful to be always ready: for all the honour, or commendations, that men can beſtow on us, after our deceaſe, will not affect, or amend the ſtate of the departed ſoul in the inviſible world. Alas, what are the imagined advantages of royalty? The king after God's own heart finds as much cauſe for lamentation, and complaint, as when a poor fugitive! He who now reigns upon the throne of David, has a kingdom of a nobler kind: whatever he doeth is noticed by, and pleaſeth all his willing people; and he will bring them all to ſhare his glory, and joy. But many are outwardly ſerviceable to his cauſe, who only ſeek themſelves in all they do, and from time to time diſgrace it with their crimes: theſe may eſcape for a ſeaſon, but at length they ſhall be numbered with his enemies, and periſh for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *His hands,* &c.] Perhaps Iſh-boſheth was not before certainly informed that Abner was deſerted to David: or both he, and the people hoped by his means to have obtained better terms. But by his death their affairs were left in confuſion, and they had no capable perſon either to lead them to battle, or to negotiate a treaty.

V. 3. *Fled to,* &c.] When Saul's army was routed, and he and his ſons ſlain, they deſerted their city, and went to ſo-

4 And

4 And Jonathan, Saul's ſon, had a ſon *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurſe took him up, and fled: and it came to paſs, as ſhe made haſte to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephiboſheth.

5 And the ſons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the houſe of Iſh-boſheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midſt of the houſe, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they ſmote him under the fifth *rib:* and Rechab and Baanah his brother eſcaped.

7 For when they came into the houſe, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they ſmote him, and ſlew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Iſh-boſheth unto David to Hebron, and ſaid to the king, Behold the head of Iſh-boſheth the ſon of Saul thine enemy, which ſought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his ſeed.

9 And David anſwered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the ſons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and ſaid unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my ſoul out of all adverſity,

10 When one told me, ſaying, Behold, Saul is dead, (thinking to have brought good tidings,) I took hold of him, and ſlew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

11 How much more, when wicked men have ſlain a righteous perſon in his own houſe upon his bed? ſhall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they ſlew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Iſh-boſheth, and buried *it* in the ſepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

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journ at Gittaim: at the ſame time the calamity, after mentioned, befel Mephiboſheth, which ſeems to have been inſerted on that account.

V. 5. *Lay on a bed*, &c.] Iſh-boſheth had enough to do in this emergency, without ſleeping on his bed at noon! But he appears to have been an inactive, ſelf-indulgent man.

V. 8. *The Lord hath*, &c.] Theſe men not only miſtook David's character, as if he ſo thirſted for revenge, that he would reward any villany, by which it could be accompliſhed: but they pretended to have performed the will of God, in this complicated treaſon, and parricide. The Lord had indeed avenged his ſervant of many of his enemies: but neither David, nor David's Lord had commiſſioned them to murder their prince, whom they profeſſed to ſerve.

V. 9. *Who hath redeemed*, &c.] (*Note*, *Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 16.) David, in the uſe of this expreſſion, intended that the hearers ſhould recollect, that the Lord had delivered him out of his troubles; and that he had not uſed any treachery or cruelty to extricate himſelf, nor allowed any of thoſe about him to do it: and therefore he needed not the aſſiſtance of ſuch vile traitors.

V. 11. *A righteous man*, &c.] Whatever Iſh-boſheth's character was before God, he was righteous *as to them*; and in ſlaying him, they ſhed innocent blood, from the baſeſt motives, and with the greateſt aggravations: and David, as God's vicegerent, moſt juſtly executed vengeance upon them for it. It had been well, if he had been equally deciſive in the caſe of Joab: that there might have been no appearance of partiality, and no hope of impunity to any criminal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Innumerable are the perils, to which our tender years are expoſed; and we owe gratitude both to the Lord and to our parents, if we were preſerved during that period, from loſing our limbs, or ſenſes, or contracting harms, which would have rendered our whole future lives uncomfortable to ourſelves, and others. Parents too ſhould take occaſion from this reflection, not only to be very attentive to their offspring, but by prayer to commit them continually to the Lord's keeping. Every thing will concur in forwarding the accompliſhment of God's word, of promiſe, or of wrath, when the appointed time approaches: on one hand there can be no failure, on the other no eſcape. Wretched indeed are they, who are engaged in ſuch undertakings, that none can ſerve them, without oppoſing the known will of God! The more exalted their ſtation, the greater is their danger: for they, in whom they repoſe the greateſt confidence, are deſtitute of principle, only ſerve them for gain, and will betray, or murder them, when their mercenary ſchemes require it. Alas! what numbers ſink from ſelf-indulgence, and carnal ſecurity into unſuſpected, and inevitable deſtruction! Many are ſo conſcious, whatever they pretend, that they ſhould be pleaſed with villainy, which conduced greatly to their profit, that they are led confidently to conclude, that others will be ſo too: and as numbers are rewarded for ſuch vile ſervices, they expect the ſame. Perſons in authority therefore ſhould decidedly manifeſt, that they will not be ſerved by ſuch wretches, but will puniſh their crimes, inſtead of rewarding their ſucceſs in villainy. The ſervants of God are encou-

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1st. David anointed king over all Israel, &c. v. 1—5. 2d. Obtaining possession of Jerusalem, v. 6—10. 3d. Employing the servants of the king of Tyre to build him an house; and taking more wives, by whom he had several children, v. 11—16. 4th. Gaining two victories over the Philistines, v. 17—25.

THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain.* Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it

raged by the scriptures, and their own experience, to trust him in the path of duty, to redeem them from all adversity, without countenancing, any more than committing, sin for that purpose; and they will pity and pray for, behave kindly to, and speak as favourable of their opposers, as they can, and not become their own avengers: and the Son of David will requite those, who pretend to serve his cause by frauds, treasons, massacres, and persecutions, with more dreadful vengeance, than was inflicted on Ish-bosheth's murderers: he hath given contrary orders, and employs no such helpers.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—2. *We are thy bone, &c.*] (1 *Chron.* c. xii. v. 23—40.) When Abner, and Ish-bosheth were dead, the tribes of Israel were left as sheep without a shepherd; and had no inclination to set up another of Saul's family in opposition to David; and having observed the quiet and prosperous state of Judah under his government, they began to entertain higher, and more honourable thoughts of him. Of their own accord therefore they applied to him by their elders; and as a reason why he should forgive their ill-usage, and terminate the civil war, they pleaded their near relation to him, being his brethren, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: they now recollected, and praised his former services, which before they had overlooked; and mentioned the Lord's appointment of him, which before they had resisted. From all this they meant to infer, that, as they were desirous of submitting to his authority, and putting themselves under his protection, so they hoped that he would rule over them in tenderness, and equity, for their safety, and comfort; as a shepherd feeds his flock: as well as that he would lead them forth to victory over their enemies; this is introduced as a part of the Lord's commission to him, when he appointed him to the kingdom; by which they conveyed this hint in the most unexceptionable, and efficacious manner.

V. 3. *Made a league, &c.*] He consented, not only to pass an act of indemnity for the past, but to bind himself by a solemn compact, that he would not tyrannize over, or oppress them.

V. 6—8.] The greater part of Jerusalem lay in the lot of Benjamin; and had hitherto been possessed by the Jebusites: but as soon as that part of the land had submitted to David, he marched to dispossess them. The citadel, called the Strong Hold of mount Zion, was fortified by nature and art, and the Jebusites set him at defiance: confiding therein, they told him that blind, and lame men could defend it against his army; and perhaps in derision placed a company of such persons upon it, who insulted his soldiers, uttering also blasphemies against the God of Israel: for the last clause, (v. 8,) may be read, "they had said, even "the blind and the lame, that he shall not come into the "house." But David commanded his men, when "they smote "the Jebusites, to throw down the blind, and the lame, into "the gutter," or ditch; as it might be read; which under the conduct of Joab, they effected accordingly, (1 *Chron.* c. xi. v. 4—7.) These were said to be "hated of David's "soul;" for they were devoted Canaanites, and idolaters, if not blasphemers of God. But by the blind and the lame, some understand the idols of the Jebusites, which David's soldiers had thus called in contempt, but their worshippers so confided in them, that they defied David to take the citadel, whilst they kept their station, or by any means to remove them; and declared, that if he did, they would no longer admit them into their temples or houses. However David got possession: and on this mount the ark was placed, and the temple was built, and the kingdom of the family of David was established.

V. 9. *Millo, &c.*] Millo seems to have been some town-hall, or council-chamber, all around which David erected such buildings, as were proper for rendering the city the seat of government.

the city of David. And David built round about Millo and inward.

10 And David went on and grew great; and the LORD God of hoſts *was* with him.

11 And Hiram king of Tyre ſent meſſengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and maſons: and they built David an houſe.

12 And David perceived that the LORD had eſtabliſhed him king over Iſrael, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Iſrael's ſake.

13 And David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jeruſalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet ſons and daughters born to David.

14 And theſe *be* the names of thoſe that were born unto him in Jeruſalem; Shamuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,

15 Ibhar alſo, and Eliſhua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

16 And Eliſhamah, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.

17 But when the Philiſtines heard that they had anointed David king over Iſrael, all the Philiſtines came up to ſeek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold.

18 The Philiſtines alſo came, and ſpread themſelves in the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David enquired of the LORD, ſaying, Shall I go up to the Philiſtines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD ſaid unto David, Go up; for I will doubtleſs deliver the Philiſtines into thine hand.

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David ſmote them there, and ſaid, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

22 And the Philiſtines came up yet again, and ſpread themſelves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David enquired of the LORD, he ſaid, Thou ſhalt not go up; *but* fetch a compaſs behind them, and come upon them over againſt the mulberry trees.

24 And let it be, when thou heareſt the ſound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou ſhalt beſtir thyſelf: for then ſhall the LORD go out before thee, to ſmite the hoſt of the Philiſtines.

25 And David did ſo, as the LORD had commanded him; and ſmote the Philiſtines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

V. 11. *Hiram ſent*, &c.] (1 *Chron.* c. xiv.) Hiram ſent to congratulate David on his acceſſion to the throne, and to enter into a league with him; and as his ſubjects were better architects than the Iſraelites, they were employed in building him a palace, ſuited to his exalted ſtation. Though Saul affected the ſplendour of royalty, yet he built not a royal palace; but David did; perhaps as a token of his belief, that the kingdom would be continued in his family.

V. 13—16.] It was cuſtomary for kings in thoſe times to multiply wives, and to ſtrengthen their intereſt by many alliances: to this David too much conformed: (*Deut.* c. xvii. v. 17.)

V. 17. *All the*, &c.] The Philiſtines, ſatisfied with the advantages, that they had enjoyed, ſince the death of Saul, had been reſtrained from moleſting the Iſraelites during their civil diſſentions; but invaded them as ſoon as they were united again under one king. Thus they delivered David from any embarraſſment about attacking thoſe, who had previouſly protected him. He immediately therefore marched to ſome fortified place, where he might check their incurſions, and conſult what meaſures to take. The valley of Rephaim was not far from Jeruſalem.

V. 20. *Baal-perazim*, &c.] That is, "the Lord "of Breaches." By ſome evident interpoſition the Lord himſelf fought againſt the Philiſtines, like the breaking forth of impetuous torrents, which bear all down before them. David therefore gave the place this name, by way of aſcribing to the Lord all the honour of the victory. Probably he meant, that the Lord had left him "Maſter of "the Breaches:" and that this was an earneſt of further victories; as the bank being broken makes way for further inundations.

V. 21.] They expected protection from their images, but they could not preſerve them from the conquerors. When the Philiſtines captivated the ark, the Lord by ſore judgments conſtrained them to reſtore it: but the Iſraelites burnt their idols without either fear, or hurt.

V. 24 *The ſound of a going*, &c.] Like the march of an army in the air; denoting the aſſiſtance of angels, or of God himſelf: yet then David was to beſtir himſelf. Sometimes the Lord commands, and employs, and ſometimes he rejects man's concurrence; that we may neither be ſelf-important, nor negligent.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Mercies long waited for in faith, and patience, will be conferred in the moſt reputable and comfortable manner: nor ſhall they go unrewarded, who perſiſt in refuſing to employ ſinful means for their own deliverance, or advance-

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. David, and the people attempting to bring the ark to Jeruſalem: Uzzah ſmitten, David diſconcerted, and the ark left with Obed-edom, v. 1—11. *2d. Another attempt made: David offering ſacrifices, and dancing before the ark, placing it in a tent prepared for it; bleſſing the people, and exerciſing liberality to them, v.* 12—15. 17—19. *3d. Michal deſpiſing, and ridiculing David; his anſwer, and her barrenneſs, v.* 16. 20—23. (1 *Chron.* c. xiii. xv. xvi.)

AGAIN, David gathered together all *the* choſen *men* of Iſrael, thirty thouſand.

2 And David aroſe, and went with all the people, that *were* with him, from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whoſe name is called by the name of The LORD of hoſts, that dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

3 And they ſet the ark of God upon a new

ment. Civil government is fixed on its firmeſt baſis, and is like to produce the moſt permanent bleſſings; when it is voluntarily delegated, and regulated by wholeſome laws; marking out duties, prerogatives, and privileges to prince and people, and reciprocally ratified as in the preſence of the Lord, by the moſt ſolemn aſſurances, with a view to his authority, appointments, and commandments. As we are all brethren; "of one bone, and of one fleſh," none ought to lord it over, to oppreſs, or to be cruel to another: princes ſhould uſe clemency, and watch over, take care of, and be tender towards their people, like ſhepherds over their flocks: and the people ſhould gratefully acknowledge the bleſſings they enjoy under their government, honour the authority of God in them, and yield them willing ſubmiſſion in all things lawful. Thus Jeſus became our brother, aſſumed, and inhabits our nature, that he might be our Prince and Saviour: thus the humbled ſinner takes encouragement from this endearing relation; applies for his ſalvation, and voluntarily ſubmits to his kind authority, and craves his powerful protection. The falſe confidences of ungodly men will aſſuredly deceive them, and their proud boaſtings will haſten their ruin: whilſt they go on, and grow great, with whom is the Lord God of hoſts. In the day of his power ſatan's ſtrong hold, the human heart, is converted into an habitation of God, through the Spirit; and into a throne, on which the Son of David rules, and brings every thought into obedience to himſelf. May he thus come and claim, and cleanſe each of our hearts; and having deſtroyed every idol, may he dwell, and reign therein for ever. It is in mercy to a nation, when wiſe, and righteous perſons are exalted to authority; and every advancement, or endowment, that we receive, ſhould remind us, that the Lord alone hath conferred the diſtinction upon us: and that he did it, that we might be uſeful to his people, by the talents entruſted to us. We have therefore the more cauſe to be thankful, and watchful; and to pray the more earneſtly for grace ſufficient, to enable us duly to improve them; nay we have double cauſe for humility, when we reflect how little we do ſo. But alas! even good men are apt to grow ſecure, and ſelf indulgent in proſperity, and to ſanction by their example thoſe abuſes, which they ſhould oppoſe, or repreſs: and all our returns for the Lord's mercies are deeply tinged with ingratitude. When the church of God begins indeed to proſper, it's enemies will generally beſtir themſelves: and the great exemption from all kinds of perſecution, and the friendlineſs of the world to religion, with which many are pleaſed, ariſe from the *policy* of the enemy, who determines to let men alone with their empty notions, forms, and profeſſion. In our ſpiritual warfare, we muſt decidedly declare for the Lord, though againſt relatives, or benefactors; and if we conſult him, he will teach us to do it, without the appearance of evil. All thoſe objects, which men idolize, will prove an uſeleſs incumbrance to them, when the Lord ſhall ariſe to execute judgment upon his enemies: and when the wicked ſhall be ſwept into deſtruction, as with an impetuous flood, the earth, and all its contents, the ſum total of the worldling's idols, ſhall be burnt up. But, they who depend upon the Lord, and act according to his directions, who beſtir them as and when he bids them, and are ready to give him all the praiſe, will doubtleſs prevail againſt all enemies, add one victory to another; and at length be admitted into his preſence, to ſee and adore their before inviſible helper.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *And David*, &c.] Probably this was propoſed, and attempted, ſoon after the late victories over the Philiſtines. This great number of Iſraelites was collected to put the greater honour upon the ark, which had been ſo long left in obſcurity.

V. 2. *From Baale*, &c.] Another name for Kirjath-jearim: Gibeah, (v. 3.) ſignifies the hill, and means that diviſion of the city, where Abinadab's houſe was ſituated. The terms here uſed in ſpeaking of the ark are very expreſſive of reverence: "The ark of God, whoſe name "is called by the name of the Lord of hoſts; that dwelleth "between the cherubims." The name of Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of hoſts, was, as it were, affixed to the ark, as it was the moſt honoured external repreſentation of his glory. And when the ark was in its proper place, in the holy of holies, the Lord manifeſted his preſence, by the viſible glory above it, as the protector, worſhip, and glory of Iſrael. But eſpecially it was typical of Chriſt, and his merits, and mediation, wherein the name of Jehovah, and all his glorious excellencies are harmoniouſly diſplayed; whilſt all his hoſts, or armies of angels, repreſented by the cherubims, deſire to look down into thoſe myſteries, or to be employed by him, who is the protector, Saviour, and glory of his redeemed people, and whom ſinners may now approach upon a mercy ſeat.

V. 3. *Upon a new cart*, &c.] Thus they made the Philiſtines their precedent, inſtead of conſulting the law of God! Abinadab and Eleazar his ſon were probably dead before this time, as the ark had continued there near ſeventy years: but Uzzah, and Ahio, two other ſons, or deſcendants of Abinadab, had ſucceeded in the attendance upon the ark; and they now undertook to drive the cart, upon which it was to be conveyed. They probably were

cart,

cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David, and all the house of Israel, played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah: and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13 And it was *so*, that when they that bare

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not of the tribe of Levi; (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* c. vii. v. 1.) And if there were any priests, or Levites present, they seem to have been unemployed: it does not appear that any care was taken to cover the ark; (*Numb.* c. vi. v. 5, 6:) nor were any sacrifices offered upon the occasion.

V. 7. *For his error*, &c.] It is enquired what Uzzah's error was? When he feared lest the ark should be thrown from the cart, with apparently good intentions, he laid hold of it to uphold it. But probably he had contracted an irreverent familiarity with this sacred symbol, and presumed upon the services, which he, and his family had performed, in so long entertaining, and taking care of it, when others neglected it: and imagined, that he had thereby acquired a sanctity, equal to that of the priests, or Levites. On this occasion, when all orders of men combined in shewing honour to the ark, he ought to have declined any further interference; but he and his brother seem to have taken the whole charge upon themselves, to the exclusion of the priests. Some think that he proposed this method of conveyance, and was in some sense answerable for the consequences: even the Kohathites, who were appointed to carry the ark, were expressly forbidden "to touch it, lest they die;" (*Numb.* c. iv. v. 15.) And there might be many circumstances, which shewed his touching the ark to be rash, irreverent, ill-timed, and unnecessary; and many things in the temper of his mind displeasing to God, which are not expressly recorded. But though Uzzah was singled out to be made an example of; the rebuke and warning were intended for David, for the priests, and for all Israel.

V. 8, 9.] Though David's heart was upright, his intentions good, and his zeal and love very fervent: yet there was much amiss in the frame of his spirit, as well as irregular in his proceedings, on this occasion. He seems to have been possessed with some measure of self-preference, or self-complacency, on account of the important service, which he was performing, after it had been so long neglected by all others; and to have thought that the goodness of the work would counterbalance every informality in the manner of performing it, and ensure to him comfort and commendation: and he had not taken time, to examine the law of God, how this good work ought to have been performed. When therefore matters turned out contrary to his expectations, he was greatly disconcerted, his lively religious affections were at once extinguished; and hard thoughts of God, and servile fear of his severity, succeeded to his zeal, hope, and joy; and he would not venture to bring the ark any nearer to him, lest he should be destroyed in like manner. Perez-uzzah signifies the breach of Uzzah.

V. 10, 11.] Until David had further considered the matter, and come to some determination, what to do with the ark, it was carried to the house of Obed-edom; who with humble confidence was ready to receive it, notwithstanding the example of Uzzah. There it abode three months, and the whole multitude returned home, and left their business unfinished. Obed-edom was a Levite, (1 *Chron.* c. xv. v. 18. 21. 24;) and he is called a Gittite, probably from the place of his birth, or of his abode. Every thing relating to his health, family, and circumstances, prospered in so extraordinary a manner, whilst the ark was with him, that every one noticed, and mentioned it to others; so that David heard of it, and was thereby instructed, and encouraged. Doubtless he behaved to the ark with due reverence.

V. 13. *They, who bare*, &c.] David had by this time

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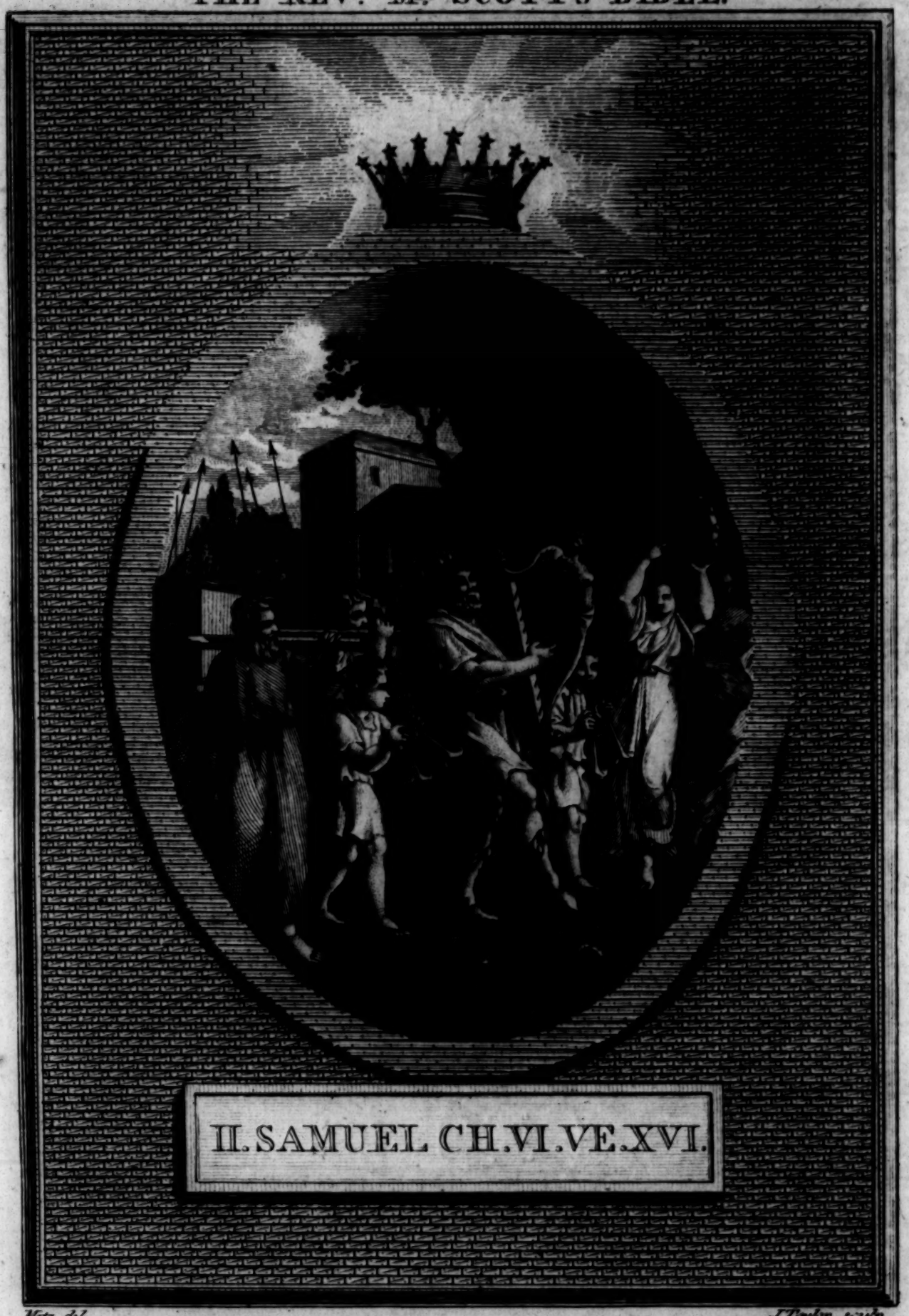

II. SAMUEL. CH. VI. VE. XVI.

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the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14 And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the LORD.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.

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discovered his fault, and the reason of the breach upon Uzzah; and had recovered his temper, and experienced the revival of his zeal, love, hope, and joy; and moreover was become better acquainted with the rule of his duty, and more humble-minded in performing it. "His "love abounded *in knowledge, and in all judgment*," which before it did not. Therefore, conscious of his own unworthiness of being employed in such a service, and sensible of his cause for gratitude, if preserved from grievous miscarriages, he set out with offering sacrifices: and as he thus united humble faith, and holy fear, with his fervent affections, he was accepted, and prospered accordingly.

V. 14. *With a linen ephod.*] Thus David laid aside the distinctions of royalty, and levelled himself with his subjects in the service of God, except as he took the lead therein; but he did not attempt to encroach upon the priestly office. The methods, which were adopted, in expressing their joy and gratitude, were such as were customary amongst them; and their music, blowing of trumpets, and sacred dances, were doubtless accompanied with psalms of praise, sung to the glory of God, by vast multitudes in concert.

V. 16. *Michal, Saul's daughter*, &c.] Saul had neglected the ark, and religion; and had educated his children accordingly. It seems that Michal had no deep sense of the importance and excellency of heavenly things: but she was possessed with high thoughts of temporal dignity, and royalty. Perhaps she considered David's zeal for the ark, as a reproach of her father's negligence: at least she considered his transports of religious joy, in the midst of the people, as a degradation of his character, and as exposing him to contempt. David the brave captain, leading forth the people to battle, and returning with them in triumph, she had admired; but David the saint, leading the people in the ordinances of God, and setting them an example of fervency of spirit in his service, she despised in her heart: yet this was the most illustrious part of his character, in the judgment of all, who savoured heavenly things.

V. 17. *The tabernacle*, &c.] The tabernacle, which had been situated at Shiloh, was not removed to Jerusalem, but was placed about this time at Gibeon, with the altar of burnt-offering, &c; but David prepared another tent for the reception of the ark, where an altar was erected, and sacrifices offered; as they were also upon the former altar. Perhaps the building of a temple was already in contemplation, and this was intended for a temporary accommodation, until that were accomplished.

V. 18, 19. *He blessed the people*, &c.] He prayed with, and for the people, and as a prophet solemnly blessed them in the name of the Lord; not using the ministry of the priests on this occasion. And afterwards he distributed of the flesh of the peace-offerings, which he sacrificed at his own expence, a sufficiency to every one present for a sacred feast, with bread and wine in proportion.

V. 20. *David returned*, &c.] That is to worship God with his own family, as probably he was wont, and to join with them in a religious feast.

How glorious, &c.] This was the language of ridicule, and contempt: because David had expressed great zeal, and earnestness, Michal would suggest, that he had behaved in an indecent manner: as he had laid aside his royal robes, she would represent it, as if he had laid aside all his clothes. But we have no reason to suppose that David did any thing improper on the occasion, except as she considered his piety, and activity in religion as unbecoming the dignity of a king. (*See* 1 *Sam.* c. xix. vu 23, 24.)

V. 21, 22. *It was before the Lord*, &c.] David very properly gloried in his zeal for the service, and glory of God: *before him* he was willing to be abased both in his

22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight; and of the maid-servants, which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

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own eyes, and in those of others: and if his earnestness in religion was considered as "playing the fool," and rendering himself vile, he desired to be still more vile; for he resolved to be still more zealous in that good cause. But he intimated to her, that it was for want of that zeal, that her father was rejected; when he was chosen, in his stead to be ruler of "the people of the Lord;" and he was therefore bound by every tye to be very earnest in promoting his worship: and that that would prove his chief honour, which she despised as disgraceful to him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our judgment in religion must be regulated by the word of God, and not by the customs of the world, or even of the church: as therein many human inventions have often, and long prevailed, when divine appointments have grown into disuse, and contempt. Notwithstanding these errors, and abuses, true believers will be accepted, who either discern not, or are unable to rectify them: yet they, who have it in their power, should embrace the first opportunity of replacing matters upon the scriptural foundation, and of bringing to light, and reputation those parts of true religion, which have been most neglected, and obscured. This is best done by shewing the nature, use, and importance of them, that others may willingly concur, and gradually call the attention of more, and more towards them: thus the change will appear to be effected by the authority of God, and of truth, and not by that of man. That the Lord dwelleth upon the mercy seat between the cherubims; that the name and perfections of Jehovah are in Jesus, the true ark of the covenant, forms the foundation of every genuine human hope of felicity, and is the source of every believer's privileges and comforts: whilst with all his hosts and all his authority, the Lord is his reconciled friend, father, and protector. Whatever else may be overlooked, these capital truths should be always placed in the most convincing, and conspicuous light, in every sermon, or religious ordinance; that sinners may be called upon to believe, and believers to rejoice in, and glorify God our Saviour. But not only is utter ignorance fatal to the soul; the irreverent abuse of the gospel may be equally destructive. Men frequently *by office*, or by habit, are conversant about the most important truths, or observances of religion with a carnal mind, till they contract a contemptuous familiarity with them; till they grow proud of their formal exercises; and till they presumptuously thrust themselves forward in such services, as do not belong to them; and, in their rash zeal for the supposed cause of godliness, use such means, as God hath not commanded, nay such as he hath prohibited. Whatever necessity may be imagined, or whatever good intentions may be pleaded, God will resent, and perhaps in this world, punish such forbidden touches of his ark: we should therefore be careful to keep our proper place, to do our own work, and to proceed in the manner prescribed in his word. Even eminently wise, and good men cannot perform very important services, without feeling, at some times and in some degree, the workings of pride, and self-preference. And though religion consists much in high affections, and great love, and delight in spiritual things; yet even when the affections are genuine, and gracious, except they are accompanied with proportionable knowledge, judgment, and humility, they will betray us into many unwarrantable practices, and expose us to severe rebukes. In the fervency of our zeal we are all very prone to forget God's precepts, and are too eager about the substance of our services, to consult the scriptures about the right method of conducting them. Thus we are unawares drawn into transgression, and meet with severe checks, when we expected great success, and comfort. This is indeed needful, and salutary, but it often exceedingly disconcerts the mind. Then the transition is very sudden from elevated joy, and confidence, to great dejection, and fretfulness; from a hope bordering on irreverence, to slavish fear, which verges to despondency, and disheartens from present duty. Such sudden changes the believer recollects with shame, often, especially in the time of his injudicious, and inexperienced zeal, he too has been "greatly displeased," and discouraged by those things, which were only intended to humble, and instruct him: and whilst he cannot excuse David, he sees more cause to condemn himself, and to pray, "enter "not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy "sight shall no man living be justified." But when one is disheartened from active service, through servile fear, others will be animated with humble faith and hope, and not dread the ark, or the ordinance; but the sin, which occasioned the rebuke, or against which the threatning is denounced. And the Lord will abundantly recompense those, who are humbly bold for him, whilst others are either presumptuous, or desponding. When godly men, who have been betrayed into any unwarrantable conduct, have had time for self-examination, searching the scriptures, and prayer, they will discover, and confess their mistakes, and be reduced to a better temper; they will justify God in his corrections; they will be convinced, that safety, and comfort consist, (not in absenting themselves from God's ordinances, or in declining dangerous services, but) in attending to their duty in a proper spirit, and manner; they will profit by their own blunders, and stand the stronger for their falls: and they will not abate in their zeal, and affections, but learn to connect them with humility, and to regulate them according to the precepts of God's word: then they may expect to prosper in their attempts to glorify God, and promote the cause of true religion. We are so unworthy, and our services are so defiled, that all our joy in God must be connected with the exercise of repentance, and faith in the Redeemer's atoning blood: and the more we are preserved from gross sins, and the more we are enabled to do in the work of God, with acceptance and comfort, the greater obligations we are brought under, and the more thankful we ought to be. We ought to serve God with our whole body, and soul, and with every endowment, or capacity we possess; our religious affections cannot be too intense, if properly directed; nor our expressions of them too strong, provided all be done decently, and in order, according to the spirit of that dispensation, which we are under. The greatest of

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. David purposing, and encouraged by Nathan, to build a temple, 1—3. 2d. The Lord by Nathan forbidding him to proceed, reminding him how the ark had hitherto been accommodated; and how God had advanced and honoured him, and giving many promises to Israel, to David, and to his seed, &c. v. 4—17, 3d. David's prayer before the Lord on that occasion, 18—29.

AND it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies,

2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart: for the LORD *is* with thee.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children

men are as nothing before the infinite God; their dependance is as entire, and their obligations, and accountableness are greater, than those of their inferiors: the meanest employment in his service is in truth the greatest honour of the mightiest princes: they ought to be as base in their own eyes, when worshipping the Lord, and confessing their sins before him, as their meanest subjects: and they should take the lead, and set the example in every thing good: and though some will despise their piety, as madness, or meanness, they will be had in honour for it by numbers, yea by many, who are not themselves religious. Indeed proud, and carnal persons always have ridiculed fervent piety, and zealous devotion, as folly, or enthusiasm. Satan hath long deluded men into a persuasion, that such holy earnestness is unmanly, or unprincely; nay unbecoming men of genius, learning, wealth, or influence, and only fit for inferior persons, for ignorant poor people, for women, or children. However wise, eminent, or excellent a man may be in other respects, if he be *scripturally* zealous, and devoted to God, he must expect contempt, and insult, even from his inferiors, his relatives, and those, on whom he hath conferred the greatest obligations: nay he need not wonder, if he be accused of the most shameless practices, without the least ground for such a charge. This is the natural effect of man's enmity to God's holiness, and of satan's subtlety in opposing true religion. But if the Lord hath chosen, and accepted us, and these things come upon us for doing his will, as in his presence, and for his glory, we should deem reproaches honourable, and determine to become still more vile in the eyes of ungodly revilers, by abounding in those services, which they despise: and whilst we meekly rebuke such opposers, the Lord will certainly plead our cause against them: and they who condemn great revivals of religion, because not conducted just to their mind, are often punished by being totally excluded from all share in so honourable a work. Piety should always be attended with liberality, as we have power: public exercises of religion must not exclude secret, and family worship; which should be neglected by none in any rank of life. And finally in this removal of the ark let us contemplate the Redeemer's ascension to glory, and seek to participate his precious gifts, and to serve him with ardent love and joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—3.] This chapter is nearly the same with the seventeenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles, and there will be a continual reference to it, in the notes upon it. David being quietly possessed of the kingdom, and victorious over all his enemies, and at rest in his palace, considered how he might employ his leisure, and prosperity in the service of God; (*Dan.* c. iv. v. 29, 30:) when it occurred to his mind how stately his own house was, and how meanly the ark was lodged; and he conceived a design of building a magnificent temple for it's reception. This design he intimated to Nathan the prophet, a man of great piety, and wisdom, who was his companion, and counsellor. Nathan, assured that the design arose from zeal for the glory of God, and that the Lord was with David in all his undertakings, encouraged him to proceed; but not by revelation from God, but according to his private judgment as a godly man.

V. 4. *That night*, &c.] This message was sent without delay, that David might not remain under a mistake, or set his heart upon a work, that was not intended for him: and it was sent by Nathan, that he might not be discouraged, or despised, by having his counsel contradicted by another prophet. Nathan was not faulty in encouraging David, any more than David was in purposing to build a temple: they both did well, but the Lord had wise reasons for determining otherwise: (1 *Kings*, c. viii. v. 18.

V. 5. *Shalt thou*, &c.] That is, dost thou entertain such a purpose, which did not enter into the thoughts of any, that were before thee? yet thou shalt not accomplish that design, for the work is assigned to another person. It appears that Nathan spake more to David, than is here recorded; for we shall meet with other reasons hereafter, why David was not permitted to build the temple: and in general we have only abstracts of the messages and discourses recorded in the Bible; (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 40.)

V. 6, 7.) Though the building of a temple accorded with the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, it was not commanded by any law, and was not therefore peculiarly any one's duty, without some further intimation from God: In the days of Moses the Lord had, by the ark the symbol

of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel.

9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime;

11 And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee, that he will make thee an house.

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

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of his presence, dwelt, and removed with his people, in a tabernacle of his own appointing. Since Israel was settled in Canaan, none of their rulers or judges, who had been raised up out of several of their tribes, were commanded to build a temple. Yet the Lord had accepted their worship, though the ark abode within curtains. It was not necessary either to the glory of God, or the good of Israel to have a temple, or it would have been prepared before: and it might therefore very well be delayed a little longer.

V. 8—11.] Though the Lord did not employ David in this service, yet he did not refuse him in anger: but he was neither to engross all the honour, nor do all the work. He had been advanced from an inferior situation to the throne of Israel, and employed in subduing *their* enemies, as well as made triumphant over his own; and he was become one of the most honourable, and renowned characters in the world. Moreover the Lord had further work for him to do of another sort, which was proper to be done before the building of the temple. The Canaanites still dwelt amongst them in the land, and greatly harassed them; and the neighbouring nations frequently afflicted them grievously: and this had been the case from their first entrance into Canaan, even in the time of the judges, who only wrought temporary deliverances, from their more grievous oppressors. It was reserved for David to crush the remnant of the Canaanites, to subjugate their other enemies, and to effect their full and quiet possession of the land of promise; and it was only by their revolts, and apostacies, that they afterwards lost the benefit of his victories. This was his peculiar work; and though given as a promise to Israel, was intended to mark out David's line of usefulness, for which the Lord had "caused him to "rest from all his *personal* enemies." And he moreover greatly reformed the state of religion, and settled the courses of the priests, and Levites, and composed hymns of praise for the use of the church in after ages, and made vast preparations for the temple itself. All this honour, and usefulness might then suffice him; though the building of the temple were reserved for another.

V. 12—16.] The Lord intended to establish David's posterity upon the throne of Israel; which was not granted to Moses, Joshua, or any of his predecessors: and therefore this part of the work, and honour was to be reserved for his son, who was hereafter to be born; (by which expression Absalom, Adonijah, and all the children, which David then had, were excluded from the succession.) He would be of a peaceable disposition, and enabled to live at peace, through the success of David's wars; and would have more leisure and ability to complete the design. To this son of David, and his posterity very precious promises were given: the Lord promised to be a father to him, and treat him as his son, and to establish the throne of his kingdom; and if he sinned, to correct him as men do their children, according to what they are able to endure, and for their good, but not to take the kingdom from him, as he had done from Saul, but to establish it from generation to generation: and though for Solomon's sin the ten tribes were rent from his son, yet the kingdom over Judah remained, to the Babylonish captivity, in the family of David, and Solomon. But these promises were also predictions of Christ, the Son of David, the true Solomon, the prince of peace, who builds the spiritual temple of true believers, to be an habitation of God through the Spirit. Part of that, which is here spoken, is applied to Christ in the New Testament; (*Heb.* c. i. v. 5.) The stability, and perpetuity of the kingdom in the house of David is in him fully accomplished: and the clause concerning the merciful chastisement of David's son, if he offended, and

16 And

16 And thine houſe and thy kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before thee: thy throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever.

17 According to all theſe words, and according to all this viſion, ſo did Nathan ſpeak unto David.

18 Then went king David in, and ſat before the LORD, and he ſaid, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a ſmall thing in thy ſight, O Lord GOD; but thou haſt ſpoken alſo of thy ſervant's houſe for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

20 And what can David ſay more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knoweſt thy ſervant.

21 For thy word's ſake, and according to thine own heart haſt thou done all theſe great things, to make thy ſervant know *them*.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O Lord GOD: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* god beſide thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Iſrael, whom God went to redeem for a people to himſelf, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedſt to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

24 For thou haſt confirmed to thyſelf thy people Iſrael, *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

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the engagement not to reject him for his tranſgreſſions, belongs to his people, who are his ſeed, and one with him: and in a parallel paſſage, (*Pſalm* lxxxix. v. 19—37;) it is put in the plural number, "If his children forſake, &c." In the expreſſion (v. 16,) "before thee," is a gracious intimation, that though theſe things would take place after David's death, yet he would be acquainted with, and rejoice in them. In ſhort David had had, and would have much honourable work of another kind: he had ſhed much blood in war, (1 *Chron.* c. xxviii. v. 3;) and lived in troubleſome times: the appointed ſeaſon was not yet arrived, nor were ſuitable preparations made; and the typical meaning of the temple required that his ſon Solomon ſhould build it.

V. 17. *So did Nathan*, &c.] He did not heſitate to contradict his own counſel; nor did he fear the cenſure, or contempt, to which this might expoſe him: and David *wiſely* thought no worſe of either him, or his meſſage, on that account.

V. 18. *Then went*, &c.] David both acquieſced in the Lord's will in this matter; and found his love, gratitude, hope, and joy greatly excited, by theſe remembrances of paſt, and promiſes of future mercies to himſelf, and his people, and poſterity; eſpecially as they all centred in the promiſed Saviour, that was to deſcend from him. Without delay therefore he went to the tabernacle of God before the ark, and poured out the fulneſs of his heart in prayer. It is ſaid, that "he ſat before the Lord;" but it is the only place in Scripture, which mentions ſitting, as the poſture of any ſervant of God in religious worſhip. And, though circumſtances may frequently render it neceſſary, it does not ſeem otherwiſe becoming: probably, the expreſſion only means his *continuance* before the Lord for a conſiderable time, and does not determine the poſture, in which he prayed.

Who am I, &c?] When David conſidered the mean eſtate, from which he had been advanced to the throne; and how he had been brought forward, employed, proſpered, and honoured: and when he recollected, the infinite majeſty, and holineſs of God, and his own ſinfulneſs, and inſignificancy before him; he thought nothing of his own endowments, or performances, but regarded the whole of what had been given to him, and done by him, as the ſubject of admiring gratitude and praiſe; and was ſurpriſed that the Lord had born with, upheld, and bleſſed ſo worthleſs a perſon hitherto, in ſuch a manner.

V. 19. *Is this the manner*, &c.] David was further led to reflect upon the bleſſings, which had now been entailed upon his family, as well as upon himſelf, and his admiration was thereby ſtill more increaſed; and he adored the riches of the divine mercy, as infinitely ſurpaſſing the largeſt bounty of man. It is not their manner thus to notice the mean, the vile, the unworthy: thus to make one kindneſs an introduction to, and an earneſt of, and reaſon for, further favours: No, this was beyond example, or conception. Or it may mean, "Is this thy manner of "dealing with guilty, polluted rebellious man?" How wonderful the love of a holy God to ſuch ſinful creatures, eſpecially in the promiſe and gift of his only-begotten Son, to be the propitiation for their ſins!

V. 20. *What can David*, &c?] He could find nothing to aſk for himſelf, kingdom, or poſterity, but what had already been covenanted to him: his prayer therefore conſiſted of thankful repetitions of the promiſes: for the Lord knew his ſervant, and would do every thing in perfect truth, wiſdom, and love, for his good; and he deſired not proſperity, wealth, or honour; except in reference to the will, and glory of God.

V. 21. *For thy word's ſake*, &c.] David could aſſign no reaſon for the Lord's former kindneſs to him, but his ſovereign will, according to his own heart, dictating his gracious promiſes, and then for his word's ſake fulfilling them: and he had the ſame ground for expecting all the remaining covenanted bleſſings.

25 And now, O Lord GOD, the word that thou haſt ſpoken concerning thy ſervant, and concerning his houſe, eſtabliſh *it* for ever, and do as thou haſt ſaid.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, ſaying, The LORD of hoſts *is* the God over Iſrael: and let the houſe of thy ſervant David be eſtabliſhed before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hoſts, God of Iſrael, haſt revealed to thy ſervant, ſaying, I will build thee an houſe; therefore hath thy ſervant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou haſt promiſed this goodneſs unto thy ſervant.

29 Therefore now let it pleaſe thee to bleſs the houſe of thy ſervant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, haſt ſpoken *it*, and with thy bleſſing let the houſe of thy ſervant be bleſſed for ever.

V. 26. *And let thy name*, &c.] By his promiſes the Lord had connected the glory of his own truth, with the eſtabliſhment of David's family: David alſo expected, and deſired, that they might be inſtrumental in maintaining true religion for the glory of God. And in Chriſt all the perfections of the Godhead are glorified; and by him the cauſe of truth, and righteouſneſs is, and will be eſtabliſhed upon earth. In all theſe ways David prayed for the magnifying of God's name, in the eſtabliſhment of his poſterity.

V. 27. *Therefore hath*, &c.] He could not have ventured to make ſuch large requeſts; if the Lord had not promiſed the bleſſings that he craved: but he was humbly bold to aſk all, that he had engaged to give. The promiſes of God are not made perſonally to us by name, as theſe were to David: but they belong to all, who believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and plead them in his name: and as far as we are conſcious that this is our deſire, experience, and practice, we may find in our heart to make our requeſts as large as the largeſt of God's promiſes, and we ſhall not meet with a refuſal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The due conſideration of the author of our temporal mercies, and of the end, for which they were beſtowed, will beſt preſerve us from abuſing them, in the gratification of pride, avarice, luxury, or ſenſuality. The more leiſure, and ability any man is favoured with; the more ſhould he deviſe, and attempt ſchemes of important uſefulneſs: and they, who are largely repleniſhed with the grace of God, will moſt comfortably enjoy their poſſeſſions, when they can render them ſubſervient to his glory, and the ſalvation of ſouls: they will be grieved to reflect how much is expended upon themſelves, and how little in the ſervice of God; and ſcarce deem any thing done for him, whilſt ſo much remains undone. They ſhould be encouraged by their brethren, and by miniſters, who conceive great deſigns for the advancement of religion, as far as they accord to the word of God: yet many plans, which are conſiſtent with both the law of love, and the goſpel of grace, may prove unſucceſsful: for the Lord, in his infinite wiſdom, may not ſee good, at that time, or in that manner, to work by them: but he will always accept, and recompenſe the willing mind. As far, as the Lord is with us, and we are influenced by his grace, we ſhall aim at nothing, but what is good in itſelf: yet we may miſtake the ſervice allotted to us, and attempt the work, which is intended for another perſon. The wiſeſt and beſt of men (not excepting prophets and apoſtles, unleſs when immediately ſpeaking by inſpiration from God,) have been liable to error; and therefore the claim of infallibility forms the very eſſence of blaſphemous arrogance. But the Lord will rectify the prejudicial miſtakes of his upright ſervants, and prevent every bad conſequence of them: and it is their true honour, as well as their duty, to retract what they have unadviſedly advanced, and to acknowledge themſelves miſtaken: and all wiſe men will reſpect them the more for doing ſo. Yet many, having once erred, fooliſhly account it their point of honour to vindicate their miſtakes, at all adventures: and thus their whole conduct becomes a continuation of blunders, ruinous to themſelves, and to others, who are deceived by them. The Lord doth not need, though he uſes, the ſervices of man: neither doth he regard external ſplendour; we cannot therefore pleaſe him in his inſtituted worſhip, if we have not the warrant of his word for what we do. He hath dwelt amongſt, accepted and bleſſed thoſe, who ſpiritually worſhipped him, in the midſt of external meanneſs; and he never rejected, or found fault with them on that account: but no outward magnificence will render formal ſervices more pleaſing to him. To be employed by the Lord is a great honour, and favour; and the more we do for him, acceptably and uſefully, the greater are our obligations to him: but even theſe gracious deſires muſt be ſubordinated to his holy will, and regulated by his precept. He appoints unto every man his work, and endows him with ſuitable qualifications: and every one of us ſhould thankfully, and faithfully mind our proper buſineſs; and rejoice in the ſuperior talents, and more honourable and important ſervices of our brethren. When our envious, diſcontented hearts are ready to murmur at diſappointments, we ſhould reflect on what the Lord hath already done for us; from what a wretched condition he hath brought us; what favours he hath conferred on us; and what bleſſings he hath prepared for us: and we ſhall readily perceive that it is much better with us, than we have deſerved, or could reaſonably have expected: nay that our deſires are not granted, becauſe our wiſe, and gracious Lord ſees it better for us, that they ſhould be refuſed. Our own plans, though well intended, and formed, are commonly fit for nothing but to be daſhed in pieces, to make way for the Lord's purpoſes reſpecting us, of which perhaps we had no conception. But, in one way or other, God will bleſs, and make uſeful to his church, thoſe perſons, who ſimply devote themſelves, and

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. David subduing the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, and dedicating their spoil to the Lord, v. 1—14. *2d. Ruling with equity over Israel; and the names of his chief servants.* (1 *Chron.* c. xviii. *Psalm* c. lx.)

AND after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive: and *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts.

3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David hough-

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all they have, to his glory. If the Lord deny them one imagined blessing, he will counterbalance the refusal with other tokens of his love, and with raising their expectations of other promised mercies: and he teaches them to rejoice in the prosperity of his church, as in their own felicity. And though Israel according to the flesh forfeited by their sins, the rest, to which they were brought; and the cause of God hath hitherto been greatly opposed, and run down: yet the time is coming when it will gain the entire ascendancy, and overspread the earth; and the whole Israel of God shall at last be planted, and dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more for ever. The most favoured, and honoured of men will soon fulfil their days in this world, and sleep with their fathers; but they die at peace with God, and depart hence to join the blessed company before the throne. Though we should desire the entail of our blessings upon our posterity, that they may be the children of God also; yet our chief comfort in life, and death must arise from looking unto Jesus, the Son of God, and the everlasting King of Israel, and in participating his covenanted mercies. In his human nature all the fulness of the godhead dwelleth bodily, and by uniting his people to himself through his holy Spirit, he builds the living temple, in which the Lord will dwell for ever. If we thus belong to him, he will not finally reject us; but when we offend, he will by rebukes, and chastenings bring us to repentance, and he will establish us, as kings, and priests before him to all eternity. We should then attend unto the word, which he hath spoken; and when our affections are excited, or our consciences are alarmed thereby, we should without delay retire, to pour out our hearts before the Lord in fervent prayer, grounded upon his gracious promises in Christ Jesus. The more the Lord really honours any man, the lower he will sink in self-abasement; as conscious that he hath nothing of his own, but meanness, sin, and misery, and that he owes all the rest to the free mercy, and goodness of God: but if the blessings, that we have already received, are so vast, and unmerited; if it appear wonderful, as it doth to every humble believer, that the Lord hath brought him hitherto; what shall we say to the future, the eternal felicity, which he hath covenanted to his people? Or of the gift of his Son to be the ransom of our souls? The Lord's thoughts, and ways are not like ours, or he never would have bestowed such blessings on rebellious polluted man! What can we then say more unto the Lord? What can we ask, or desire, but the performance of those promises, which of his own sovereign mercy he had made unto us? Comparing the former displays of the glorious excellencies of our God, with those, which he hath manifested in his dealings with us, we shall at once have our admiring gratitude enlarged, and our expectation of further blessings increased; and shall find in our hearts to plead his precious promises, neither deeming them too large, nor too hard for him to perform to us wretched sinners. Though he have not given us "a great name, like to that "of the great men, that are in the earth;" we shall be contented with a name written in the book of life, and a clear character amongst our brethren: and we can desire no more for our posterity, than that they may be blessed with the blessing of the Lord for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1. *Metheg-ammah*, &c.] This signifies the bridle of Ammah: it was probably some place, where the Philistines by a garrison curbed the Israelites. It was perhaps one of the towns belonging to Gath, which David took at this time. The Philistines had long oppressed Israel; Samson had begun to deliver his people from them; but David effectually subjugated them, and left them no power any more to molest them.——N. B. In these chapters, where any thing is mentioned, that is neither in the text, nor referred to in the place, it may be found in the parallel scriptures, referred to, at the close of the contents.

V. 2. *He smote Moab*, &c.] The Jews say that the Moabites had slain David's parents: but doubtless he had some just cause for this war; and for the severity, with which he treated them: as he seems to have measured out, and desolated two thirds of the country; and to have slaughtered two thirds of the captives. Thus the Moabites became tributaries to Israel, as had been predicted: (*Num.* c. xxiv. v. 17.)

V. 3. *As he went*, &c.] Or "to establish his domi-"nion, &c." Some understand this of David, others of Hadadezer. Probably this prince was jealous of David's growing greatness, and came to assist the Moabites, in order to secure his own dominions towards the Euphrates: by which means David had a fair opportunity given him, of extending his conquests to that river, as had been promised: (*Gen.* c. xv. v. 18. *Deut.* c. xi. v. 24.)

V. 4. *Seven hundred*, &c.] Seven thousand are mentioned in Chronicles: perhaps they were divided into seven hundred divisions of ten men each: however David dis-

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ed all the chariot *horſes*, but reſerved of them *for* an hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damaſcus came to ſuccour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David ſlew of the Syrians two and twenty thouſand men.

6 Then David put garriſons in Syria of Damaſcus; and the Syrians became ſervants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preſerved David whitherſoever he went.

7 And David took the ſhields of gold that were on the ſervants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jeruſalem.

8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much braſs.

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had ſmitten all the hoſt of Hadadezer,

10 Then Toi ſent Joram his ſon unto king David, to ſalute him, and to bleſs him, becauſe he had fought againſt Hadadezer, and ſmitten him: (for Hadadezer had wars with Toi:) and *Joram* brought with him veſſels of ſilver, and veſſels of gold, and veſſels of braſs;

11 Which alſo king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the ſilver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he ſubdued:

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philiſtines, and of Amalek, and of the ſpoil of Hadadezer, ſon of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David gat *him* a name when he returned from ſmiting of the Syrians in the valley of ſalt, *being* eighteen thouſand *men*.

14 And he put garriſons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garriſons: and all they of Edom became David's ſervants. And the LORD preſerved David whitherſoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Iſrael; and David executed judgment and juſtice unto all his people.

16 And Joab the ſon of Zeruiah *was* over the hoſt; and Jehoſhaphat the ſon of Ahilud *was* recorder;

17 And Zadok the ſon of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the ſon of Abiathar, *were* the prieſts; and Seraiah *was* the ſcribe;

18 And Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's ſons were chief rulers.

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abled the moſt of them, not deſiring to truſt in chariots, or in horſes, but in the living God.

V. 5. *The Syrians of*, &c.] Theſe were in alliance with, but not ſubject to Hadadezer. The Syrians of Aram-naharaim, or Meſopotamia, were another diſtinct people, and on this occaſion oppoſed David.

V. 9—11.] Hamath lay north of Canaan, and ſouth of Damaſcus. Thus by arms, or alliances, the heathen nations became tributary to David, and furniſhed thoſe riches, which he dedicated to the Lord for the building of the temple.

V. 12. *Of the children of Ammon*, &c.] Either ſome of them at this time aſſiſted the Moabites; or this is ſpoken by way of anticipation. (c. x.)

V. 13. *Of the Syrians*, &c.] They ſeem to have been Edomites fighting in behalf of the Syrians: this laſt victory obtained David great renown, though Joab and Abiſhai commanded in the battle. Thus the predictions concerning the Edomites began to be fulfilled: (*Gen.* c. xxv. v. 23. c. xxvii. v. 40. *Num.* c. xxiv. v. 18.)

V. 15—18. *David executed*, &c.] This marks the aſſiduity, as well as the equity, and impartiality of David's adminiſtration; in which, as well as in his victories, he was a type of Chriſt. Under him Joab was chief commander of the forces. Jehoſhaphat recorded and brought forward every buſineſs in an orderly manner. Under Abiathar the High Prieſt, Ahimelech his ſon, and Zadok deſcended from Eleazar, were the preſiding prieſts, probably the one on Mount Zion, the other at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was. Seraiah was ſcribe, or ſecretary, to inſpect and manage all writings concerning foreign or domeſtic tranſactions. And Benaiah commanded the Cherethites and Pelethites; David's conſtant attendants, or guards, who were choſen out from his other troops, and probably conſiſted mainly of thoſe, who had accompanied him in his diſtreſſes. Whilſt his ſons, who were grown up, were initiated into public buſineſs, as they became capable of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In due ſeaſon, and ſucceſſion, every promiſe, and prediction of God's word will receive their full accompliſhment: ſhort is the triumphing, and certain the ruin of all his enemies, however ſtrong, and confederated they are. They, who confide in the Lord's protection, and are doing his work, will be preſerved, and proſpered by him, whitherſoever they go. Theſe will not allow themſelves to glory in their ſucceſs, or to eſtabliſh any other ground of confidence, than the power, and truth of him, who hath hitherto helped them: to him they will dedicate the fruits of their proſperity; and in this they will be diſtinguiſhed from all mighty ones, who have been renowned upon the earth. It is true wiſdom to court their friendſhip, whom the Lord proſpers. A ſafe, and honourable peace ſhould be the object of all wars: and diligent impartial admini-

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. David's enquiry after the remains of Saul's family, and his diſcovery of Mephiboſheth, v. 1—4. 2d. Mephiboſheth ſent for, the proviſion made for him, and his behaviour on the occaſion, v. 5—13.

AND David ſaid, Is there yet any that is left of the houſe of Saul, that I may ſhew him kindneſs for Jonathan's ſake?

2 And *there was* of the houſe of Saul a ſervant, whoſe name *was* Ziba: and when they had called him unto David, the king ſaid unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he ſaid, Thy ſervant *is he*.

3 And the king ſaid, *Is* there not yet any of the houſe of Saul, that I may ſhew the kindneſs of God unto him? And Ziba ſaid unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a ſon, *which is* lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king ſaid unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba ſaid unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the houſe of Machir, the ſon of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

5 Then king David ſent, and fetched him out of the houſe of Machir, the ſon of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when Mephiboſheth, the ſon of Jonathan, the ſon of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David ſaid, Mephiboſheth. And he anſwered, Behold thy ſervant.

7 And David ſaid unto him, Fear not: for I will ſurely ſhew thee kindneſs for Jonathan thy father's ſake, and will reſtore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou ſhalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himſelf, and ſaid, What *is* thy ſervant, that thou ſhouldeſt look upon ſuch a dead dog as I *am*?

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's ſervant, and ſaid unto him, I have given unto thy maſter's ſon all that pertained to Saul, and to all his houſe.

10 Thou therefore, and thy ſons, and thy ſervants, ſhall till the land for him, and thou ſhalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy maſter's ſon may have food to eat: but Mephiboſheth thy maſter's ſon ſhall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen ſons and twenty ſervants.

11 Then ſaid Ziba unto the king, Accord-

ſtration of juſtice, the buſineſs of thoſe, who are advanced above others; for their authority was given them, not to look great, but to do good with. Thus the Son of David ſubjects his enemies: his goſpel is a ſavour of life to ſome, and of death to others: he will be glorified *upon* his obſtinate oppoſers; and *by* thoſe, who welcome him as their Lord, and Saviour. Many aſſiſt in building his ſpiritual temple, who have no place in it: his government is in judgment, and in juſtice, as well as in mercy: and all, who adhere to him faithfully in a ſtate of humiliation, and ſuffering, ſhall reign with him for ever in glory. To him let us ſubmit, his friendſhip let us ſeek, and his ſervice let us count our honour, and our pleaſure; and diligently attend to the work, which he aſſigns to each of us.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *And David ſaid*, &c.] Mephiboſheth was only five years old at his father's death, (c. iv. v. 4;) but at this time he had a ſon, (v. 12.) So that many years had elapſed before David made this enquiry. For above ſeven years he had been oppoſed by Iſh-boſheth, and had had many engagements afterwards: he had not injured any of Saul's family; but he ſeems to have been too forgetful of his friendſhip with, and engagements to Jonathan. As Mephiboſheth was brought up in obſcurity beyond Jordan, and perhaps purpoſely concealed by the ſuſpicious care of his friends, David probably knew not that Jonathan had any child living. But to ſhew his entire forgiveneſs of Saul's injuries, and his gratitude for Jonathan's kindneſs, he wiſhed to reſtore Saul's eſtate to, and confer other favours, on ſome of his remaining poſterity, for the ſake of his friend.

V. 3. *The kindneſs of God*, &c.] That is, for the ſake of the oath of God ſworn to Jonathan: or according to the example of the Lord's kindneſs unto himſelf.

V. 4. *Of Machir*, &c. &c.] This ſame perſon was afterwards a very uſeful friend to David; (c. xvii. v. 27—29:) and perhaps the more willingly on account of David's kindneſs to Mephiboſheth, whom he had generouſly brought up.

V. 6. *And David ſaid*, &c.] David might have heard of the name of Mephiboſheth, or perhaps had ſeen him in his infancy, and now recollected his features, though he knew not before that he was living.

V. 7. *All the land of*, &c.] Saul's paternal eſtate, which came into David's hands after the death of Iſh-boſheth, and whith ſeems to have been very large, was reſtored by him to Mephiboſheth, as the right heir; and he was beſides admitted to a place at David's own table.

V. 8. *A dead dog*, &c.] That is, a perſon, who is very mean, and incapable of being any ways ſerviceable: Mephiboſheth not only adverted to his unworthineſs, but to his bodily infirmities, in this expreſſion of grateful ſurpriſe. He ſeems to have been an unambitious, modeſt, friendly and pious man.

V. 9—12.] Ziba had been greatly enriched under Saul, and was now entruſted with the management of Mephiboſheth's eſtate, becauſe of his profeſſed affection for his family:

ing to all that my lord the king hath commanded his ſervant, ſo ſhall thy ſervant do. As for Mephiboſheth, *ſaid the king*, he ſhall eat at my table, as one of the king's ſons.

12 And Mephiboſheth had a young ſon, whoſe name *was* Micha: and all that dwelt in the houſe of Ziba *were* ſervants unto Mephiboſheth.

13 So Mephiboſheth dwelt in Jeruſalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. David's embaſſy to the king of Ammon, and the abuſe, which his ambaſſadors met with, v. 1—5. 2d. His ſucceſsful wars with the Ammonites, and their allies, v. 6—19. (1 Chron. c. xix.)

AND it came to paſs after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his ſon reigned in his ſtead.

2 Then ſaid David, I will ſhew kindneſs unto Hanun the ſon of Nahaſh, as his father ſhewed kindneſs unto me. And David ſent to comfort him, by the hand of his ſervants for his father. And David's ſervants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon ſaid unto Hanun their lord, Thinkeſt thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath ſent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* ſent his ſervants unto thee to ſearch the city, and to ſpy it out, and to overthrow *it?*

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's ſervants, and ſhaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and ſent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he ſent to meet them, becauſe the men were greatly

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but David ſeems to have been more generous, than prudent in this appointment. Mephiboſheth's family, and eſpecially his ſon Micha, were to be provided for out of the eſtate, though he himſelf lived at David's table. Some underſtand the laſt clauſe of the 11th verſe, as the words of Ziba, propoſing in a boaſting manner to entertain Mephiboſheth royally at his own table, without troubling David.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Amidſt a multiplicity of affairs, we are prone to forget the gratitude we owe, and the engagements we are under, not only to our friends, but to the Lord himſelf: but perſons of real, and eminent godlineſs, when they recall to mind their obligations, will have no reſt till they have diſcharged them: they will be burthened with thoſe poſſeſſions, which they but ſuppoſe *in equity* to belong to another: and they will be impatient to expreſs their forgiveneſs of thoſe, who have injured them; and their gratitude to the perſons, or the relations of thoſe, who have been kind to them. They, who have much in their power, ſhould enquire after opportunities of doing good; for frequently the moſt deſerving objects of our compaſſion are concealed by their modeſty, and patience. Kindneſs ſhewn to the moſt helpleſs perſons is ſometimes recompenſed, in a very ſeaſonable manner, by thoſe, from whom we had no expectation of obtaining, or wanting aſſiſtance. To be trained up in privacy, poverty, and hardſhip, and afterwards more proſpered, is vaſtly more comfortable; than to be brought up in pride, and delicacy, with great expectations, and then to be tumbled into poverty, and diſtreſs. But "when riches "increaſe, they are increaſed that eat them;" and though the liberality of friends ſhould be thankfully acknowledged, it can contribute little towards our real happineſs, further than the providing of us with food and raiment, and the other neceſſaries of life. But the love of Jeſus, who ſeeks out, provides for, enriches, and entertains us poor ruined, worthleſs ſinners, confers ſubſtantial, and enduring felicity. May we humbly acknowledge our unworthineſs of his mercies, thankfully accept of them, and return him our chearful praiſes, and willing ſervices.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 2. *His father ſhewed*, &c.] Nahaſh probably ſhewed kindneſs to David in the days of Saul, and out of enmity to that prince, (1 *Sam.* c. xi.). It is queſtioned whether David ought to have ſhewn ſuch reſpect to the memory of ſo cruel an enemy to his people; eſpecially as the law forbad them to ſeek the peace, and proſperity of the Ammonites: (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 3—6.) But they were not of the devoted nations, and perhaps it was not wrong for David to expreſs a ſenſe of gratitude to a benefactor, without deciding upon the motives of his conduct, and to render the cuſtomary civilities to his ſon, upon his deceaſe. However the Lord over-ruled it, contrary to David's intention, for the avenging his people, and for the cruſhing of the force, and diminiſhing the poſſeſſions of their encroaching neighbours.

V. 3, 4.] The conſciouſneſs of the injuries, which they had done to, and ſtill meditated againſt the Iſraelites, ſuggeſted theſe ſuſpicions; and they judged of David by their own diſpoſitions, and deſerts. But if they had ſeen cauſe to have been reſerved, they ſhould not have ill-treated David's ambaſſadors: this was a violation of the moſt ſacred laws of nations; the greateſt affront imaginable to the prince, whom they repreſented; and a direct declaration of war againſt him. According to the ſentiments and cuſtoms of thoſe days, they treated them in the moſt contemptuous manner, which they could deviſe.

V. 5. *Tarry at Jericho*, &c.] This was ſome village near the ſpot, where Jericho had ſtood; for that city was not yet rebuilt. In this place, as ſoon as they had croſſed over Jordan, they were adviſed to tarry till their beards were grown; (which were conſidered as neceſſary to the

aſhamed:

aſhamed: and the king ſaid, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 And when the children of Ammon ſaw that they ſtank before David, the children of Ammon ſent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thouſand footmen, and of king Maacah a thouſand men, and of Iſh-tob twelve thouſand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he ſent Joab, and all the hoſt of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Iſh-tob, and Maacah, *were* by themſelves in the field.

9 When Joab ſaw that the front of the battle was againſt him before and behind, he choſe of all the choice *men* of Iſrael, and put *them* in array againſt the Syrians.

10 And the reſt of the people he delivered into the hand of Abiſhai his brother, that he might put *them* in array againſt the children of Ammon.

11 And he ſaid, If the Syrians be too ſtrong for me, then thou ſhalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too ſtrong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which ſeemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him unto the battle againſt the Syrians: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon ſaw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they alſo before Abiſhai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jeruſalem.

15 And when the Syrians ſaw that they were ſmitten before Iſrael, they gathered themſelves together.

16 And Hadarezer ſent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river; and they came to Helam: and Shobach the captain of the hoſt of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Iſrael together, and paſſed over Jordan, and came to Helam: and the Syrians ſet themſelves in array againſt David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Iſrael; and David ſlew *the men of* ſeven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thouſand horſemen, and ſmote Shobach the captain of their hoſt, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* ſervants to Hadarezer ſaw that they were ſmitten before Iſrael, they made peace with Iſrael, and ſerved them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

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appearing in public of grave, and venerable perſons;) that thus the diſgrace, that they had received, might be obliterated.

V. 6. *They ſtank*, &c.] (*Gen.* c. xxxiv. v. 30. 1 *Sam.* c. xiii. v. 4.) The Ammonites had made themſelves ſo odious to David, that they could expect no other but war; and therefore they determined to form alliances, and act offenſively. The numbers of forces, which they hired, are nearly the ſame as in Chronicles: but they are there ſaid to be thirty-two thouſand chariots, which is very improbable; and either is ſome error, that hath crept into the text, or admits of ſome other conſtruction. But it is of ſmall importance to us.

V. 8—14. *The gate*, &c.] That is, of Medeba, a city upon the borders of the Ammonites, and in their poſſeſſion. Thus Joab's forces were oppoſed by two armies, before and behind: but his arrangement was judicious, and his addreſs ſpirited. His valour, and regard to his country were *real*, and eminent: and the language of faith, and piety, which he employed, was honourable to God, and might be uſeful to the ſoldiers.

V. 18. *Seven hundred*, &c.] Perhaps ſeven thouſand men belonging to ſeven hundred chariots; and forty thouſand men, who fought on foot, or on horſeback, as there was occaſion, or opportunity. (1 *Chron.* c. xix. v. 18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to ſympathize with the afflicted, and ſhew gratitude to our friends: but nothing, except vexation, and diſappointment, can be expected by courting the friendſhip of ungodly perſons. Treacherous minds are always ſuſpicious: they are conſcious, that they mean to deceive, when they can gain by it; and they naturally ſuppoſe that others mean the ſame: and weak, and wicked princes will generally employ ſuch counſellors. It is the height of folly to awaken the reſentment of thoſe by inſult, and contempt, whoſe power of taking vengeance cannot be thus diminiſhed: and the fatal effects of ſuch raſh affronts, though little feared, are often ſeverely felt. We ſhould ſhew reſpect and kindneſs to thoſe, who have been unjuſtly diſgraced: but yet it is needleſs to lay ſuch things to heart. Unmerited reproaches or contempt will ſoon wear

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. Joab's ſucceſs againſt the Ammonites, v. 1. *2d. David committing adultery with Bath-ſheba the wife of Uriah, v.* 2—4. *3d. Informed of her pregnancy, ſending for Uriah, and in vain attempting to induce him to viſit his wife, v.* 5—13. *4th. Projecting, and compaſſing his death, with that of other Iſraelites, by the ſword of the Ammonites, v.* 14—17. *5th. Joab's meſſage, and David's anſwer on this occaſion, v.* 18—25. *6th. His marriage with Bath-ſheba, and the Lord's diſpleaſure, v.* 26, 27.

AND it came to paſs, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David ſent Joab, and his ſervants with him, and all Iſrael; and they deſtroyed the children of Ammon, and beſieged Rabbah: but David tarried ſtill at Jeruſalem.

2 And it came to paſs in an evening-tide, that David aroſe from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's houſe: and from the roof he ſaw a woman waſhing herſelf; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David ſent and enquired after the woman. And *one* ſaid, *Is* not this Bath-ſheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David ſent meſſengers, and took her: and ſhe came in unto him, and he lay with her, (for ſhe was purified from her uncleanneſs,) and ſhe returned unto her houſe.

5 And the woman conceived, and ſent and told David, and ſaid, I *am* with child.

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away, and a clear conſcience ſhould be ſufficient to counterbalance the preſent uneaſineſs of it. Yet by ſuch means valuable perſons are driven into obſcurity for a ſeaſon, to the loſs of the public, rather than of themſelves. They, who are the moſt ready to commit injuſtice, are commonly the moſt averſe to a reconciliation: and confidence in numbers, ſtrength, or valour frequently buoys up men to their deſtruction; for though hand join in hand the wicked ſhall not be unpuniſhed. But a good cauſe, and a ſingle dependance upon the Lord form the ſureſt indications of ſucceſs: and when valiant men are cordial to the intereſts of their country, and are defending its civil, and religious liberties, their animation, and preſence of mind will often increaſe in proportion to their dangers, and difficulties. It is our duty, in every emergency, to exert all our powers of body, and mind, to do our uttermoſt, to encourage others to do the ſame, and to be helpful to one another, as there may be occaſion; and then to commit the event to the Lord: "Let him do what ſeemeth him "good." But alas many uſe good words, and ſeem in perilous circumſtances, to depend on, and to be ſubmiſſive to the Lord, whoſe hearts are not upright in his ſight: and many are very ſerviceable to his church, who have no part in it's peculiar bleſſings. But let ſinners recollect that the Son of David will aſſuredly reſent their contempt of his ambaſſadors, whom he ſends to them with a meſſage of peace, and love; and that he will conſider their ill-uſage of them, as a declaration of war againſt himſelf. In this warfare numbers and confederacies are utterly unavailing, and deſtruction is inevitable; except to thoſe, who ſubmit, ſue for peace, and become his ſervants. They ought therefore to ſeparate from his enemies, fearing any longer to help them; and to make it their great object to obtain his forgiveneſs, and to be numbered amongſt his ſubjects. All his people ſhould be valiant in his cauſe, and for his truth, and righteouſneſs: and miniſters ſhould neither fear, nor be aſhamed to execute their embaſſy of reconciliation, however they are deſpiſed, inſulted, or perſecuted: for he will plead their cauſe, comfort them under their trials, and reward their faithfulneſs with a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—5.] David committed the management of the war wholly to Joab, and continued at eaſe in his palace, when he ought to have been fighting the battles of the Lord: this ſeems to have been his firſt falſe ſtep in this moſt lamentable tranſaction. Being out of the line of preſent duty, he ſlothfully waſted his time: without doubt his proſperity had gradually rendered him more negligent in his devotional exerciſes, and more indulgent to his ſenſual inclinations; and perhaps occaſioned ſome meaſure of ſelf-confidence, and carnal ſecurity. Thus his natural paſſions gathered force, in proportion as his holy affections were abated: and having been accuſtomed without cenſure to marry any ſingle woman, for whom he conceived an affection, his inclinations had not been habituated to a denial. When therefore, after an unſeaſonable ſleep, he was walking vacantly on the flat roof of his houſe, and by ſome means had a view of a beautiful woman, who was waſhing herſelf from a ceremonial uncleanneſs (v. 4;) he allowed himſelf to gaze upon her, until he luſted after her in his heart; and perhaps not ſuppoſing her to be a married woman, he ſent to enquire after her, in order to add her to the number of his wives: but his ſinful paſſion had got ſuch aſcendancy that he was the more inflamed, by being informed, that ſhe was the wife of one of his braveſt, and moſt faithful officers: and he ſent meſſengers for her, (who could not well be ignorant of his intentions,) and committed adultery with her. And though ſhe was previouſly a perſon of virtue, and reputation, he obtained her compliance, probably by means of thoſe hopes, which his rank in life was capable of inſpiring. This crime was attended with manifold aggravations: It was a violation of the ſeventh commandment, and was puniſhable by the death of both parties by the judicial law. David was chief magiſtrate, to whom it belonged to carry that law into execution: he was at this time about fifty years of age; and

6 And David ſent to Joab, *ſaying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab ſent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war proſpered.

8 And David ſaid to Uriah, Go down to thy houſe, and waſh thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's houſe, and there followed him a meſs *of meat* from the king.

9 But Uriah ſlept at the door of the king's houſe with all the ſervants of his lord, and went not down to his houſe.

10 And when they had told David, ſaying, Uriah went not down unto his houſe, David ſaid unto Uriah, Cameſt not thou from *thy* journey? why *then* didſt thou not go down unto thine houſe?

11 And Uriah ſaid unto David, The ark, and Iſrael, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the ſervants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields: ſhall I then go into mine houſe to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as*-thou liveſt, and *as* thy ſoul liveth, I will not do this thing.

12 And David ſaid to Uriah, Tarry here to-day alſo, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jeruſalem that day and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the ſervants of his lord, but went not down to his houſe.

14 And it came to paſs in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and ſent *it* by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, ſaying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hotteſt battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be ſmitten, and die.

16 And it came to paſs, when Joab obſerved the city, that he aſſigned Uriah unto a place, where he knew that valiant men *were*.

17 And the men of the city went out and

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he had already many wives; and many children, to whom the example would be very prejudicial: his acquaintance with the divine law, his bold profeſſion of true religion, his high reputation for piety, and wiſdom, and the immenſe obligations, which the Lord had conferred on him: the rank, and character of Bath-ſheba, and the ſervice for him and his country, in which Uriah was then engaged, were all aggravating circumſtances: and we can only ſay in his behalf, that it was not his cuſtom, but was one crime, into which he was betrayed. When Bath-ſheba found that ſhe was with child by David, ſhe juſtly dreaded the reſentment of her huſband, who had been abſent from her a conſiderable time; and ſhe ſent to inform David, that by the abuſed interpoſition of his authority, which perhaps he had promiſed, ſhe might be preſerved from being made a public example.

V. 6. *Uriah the Hittite*, &c.] Uriah was probably a deſcendant from the Hittites; but he was a proſelyte, and had the heart of an Iſraelite. Under the guilt of ſo heinous a ſin, David was more anxious to conceal his ſhame, and prevent the temporal conſequences, than to obtain forgiveneſs from God! Perhaps he feared leſt Uriah, in his deep reſentment, ſhould raiſe rebellion againſt him: certainly he feared the reproaches, which he might expect from every quarter, when it ſhould be publicly known, that he had acted ſo inconſiſtent with his character, and his zeal for the worſhip of God, and the honour of his law. In this confuſed ſtate of mind, he did not perceive the treachery, and injuſtice, of drawing in Uriah to conſider himſelf, as the father of the child, with which Bath-ſheba was pregnant. This was the plan, which he formed, and he ſent for Uriah, as if he could depend more on him, to inform him of the ſtate of the war, than upon any other perſon.

V. 8. *Go down*, &c.] Uriah's houſe was near to David's palace: and David never queſtioned but he would gladly embrace the opportunity of viſiting his wife, and accordingly provided them an entertainment: but whether any thing had excited his ſuſpicions; or whether through a hardy ſelf-denied diſpoſition, he ſcorned to fare better than his commander, and comrades, he would not go home, but ſlept with the ſoldiers of David's guard: and thus the Lord defeated David's deſign of covering his tranſgreſſion.

V. 11. *The ark*, &c.] It is not probable, that the ark of the covenant was carried with Joab into the field of battle; and yet the mean accommodation of it at Jeruſalem contains no reaſon, why Uriah ſhould not go home to his houſe; becauſe it was habitually in that ſtate. But in ſuch vehement aſſeverations men do not always attend to exact reaſoning, and argument.

V. 12, 13. *Tarry here to-day*, &c.] David pretended further buſineſs with Uriah, but meant to practiſe upon him, if poſſible, to break his reſolution. Accordingly he entertained him at his own table, and, in addition to his other injuries, became his tempter to drunkenneſs; hoping that when his paſſions were inflamed, and his guard removed, he might be induced to go home to his wife.

V. 14—17.] Satan having gradually drawn David on in one ſinful attempt after another, had prepared his mind for more atrocious wickedneſs. He now perceived that if Uriah lived, he muſt diſcover his wife's infidelity, and expoſe his ſhame: to prevent this was at preſent his leading object, and all other conſequences were forgotten: and to

fought with Joab: and there fell *ſome* of the people of the ſervants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died alſo.

18 Then Joab ſent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the meſſenger, ſaying, When thou haſt made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

29 And if ſo be that the king's wrath ariſe, and he ſay unto thee, Wherefore approached ye ſo nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would ſhoot from the wall?

21 Who ſmote Abimelech the ſon of Jerubbeſheth? did not a woman caſt a piece of a milſtone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? Then ſay thou, Thy ſervant Uriah the Hittite is dead alſo.

22 So the meſſenger went, and came and ſhewed David all that Joab had ſent him for.

23 And the meſſenger ſaid unto David, Surely the men prevailed againſt us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the ſhooters ſhot from off the wall upon thy ſervants, and *ſome* of the king's ſervants be dead, and thy ſervant Uriah the Hittite is dead alſo.

25 Then David ſaid unto the meſſenger, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto Joab, Let not this thing diſpleaſe thee; for the ſword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more ſtrong againſt the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her huſband was dead, ſhe mourned for her huſband.

27 And when the mourning was paſt, David ſent and fetched her to his houſe, and ſhe became his wife, and bare him a ſon: but the thing that David had done diſpleaſed the LORD.

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attain this Uriah muſt die. But David would not kill him with his own hands, nor order his ſervants to aſſaſſinate him, nor put him to death under colour of law: theſe things were too bare-faced, his reputation would be ruined by ſuch meaſures; nay perhaps the direct injuſtice, and murder would have diſquieted his conſcience, inſenſible as it was become. But a more plauſible, and ſecret method of getting rid of him was ſuggeſted to his mind; which at that moment ſeemed to him leſs atrocious, though in reality it was more complicated, and heinous. The known valour, fidelity, and zeal for his country, of this gallant officer, ſuggeſted the method of diſpatching him: David had ſuch confidence in this much-injured man, that he heſitated not to entruſt him with the letter, which decreed his death; and whatever elſe Uriah ſuſpected, he did not think David capable of ſuch treachery, and betrayed not his truſt. Joab, and thoſe, "who retired from Uriah," were made accomplices in his murder; and his fellow ſoldiers, who were ſlain with him, were no leſs murdered than he was. Whatever caſuiſtry David might uſe with his conſcience, this was deliberate murder, with *malice prepenſe*, aggravated exceedingly by the circumſtance, that theſe men were ſlain in the very act of fighting for him, and his kingdom. Perhaps Joab imagined that David had ſome *political* reaſon for taking off Uriah in that manner: but probably he was rejoiced to ſee him involved in the guilt of murder, as well as himſelf. But is this David, who repeatedly ſpared his enemy; and whoſe heart ſmote him, when he had cut off Saul's ſkirt? Alas! how is he changed, and fallen!

V. 21. *Then ſay thou*, &c.] This was a plain intimation to the meſſenger, that the death of Uriah would be ſo agreeable to David, as to reconcile him to the loſs, that had been ſuſtained. Thus he began already to be deſpiſed even by his accomplices! Amidſt all the painful ſenſations excited by reading this chapter, we are pleaſed to find David's ſoldiers ſo ready at quoting the ſcripture: for probably the book of Judges was then extant as a part of holy writ.

V. 25. *Let not this thing*, &c.] Provided the brave Uriah were dead, David ſeems not to have regarded who were ſlain with him. He ſpake on this occaſion with an indifference almoſt bordering upon infidelity: except he meant to refer the event merely to the providence of God; as if no one was to blame in the affair. On other occaſions he conſidered ſuch events as a rebuke, which required humiliation, prayer, and ſacrifices; and a more entire dependance upon the Lord in future: and he would have cenſured the imprudence of the commanders, and charged them on pain of his diſpleaſure, to be more careful of the lives of their brethren.

V. 27. *She became*, &c.] David married Bath-ſheba as ſoon, as it could be done with decency, and the cuſtomary mourning, (which was in this caſe a vile mockery,) was ended. But though there remained no injured huſband to avenge the adultery, the premature birth of the child diſcovered it. All this time David continued impenitent, and comparatively unconcerned. Probably he ſtill maintained his profeſſion, and went on with his attendance upon the ordinances of religion. By ſome ingenious ſelf-flattery he endeavoured to palliate his conduct to himſelf; and no one elſe called him to account, or reproved him for it. Perhaps the general practice of other princes induced him to conclude, that perſons in his high ſtation were bound to the ſame ſtrictneſs with their ſubjects. How though he had no deep remorſe of conſcience, we may be ſure that he loſt all his life, ſpirituality, and comfort in religion, and retained nothing but a barren form: and per-

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. Nathan sent to David; his parable, and application of it; and David confessing his sin, and assured of forgiveness, v. 1—13. 2d. The death of the child, notwithstanding David's humiliation, and prayers: and his consequent behaviour, 14—23. 3d. The birth of Solomon, and the name, which the Lord gave him, v. 24, 25. 4th. Rabbah taken, and David's treatment of the Ammonites, v. 26—31.

haps wondered how it was, that his attendance on ordinances was so unprofitable to him; as many seem to do, who never seriously enquire into the cause. Small transgressions, like slight wounds, give much pain to the believer's conscience: but enormous crimes, like a violent blow upon the head, leave them for a season in an unaccountable state of insensibility.

But the thing, &c.] Such marriages, as this of David with Bath-sheba, with whom he had previously committed adultery, were not forbidden in the law: (for it was needless, as both parties were condemned to die:) nor was David afterwards ordered to put her away. Yet as he married her in order to cover his iniquity, and as the desire of possessing her may be supposed to have been one inducement to the murder of Uriah, it formed an additional aggravation of the crime: and the whole transaction, from first to last, was displeasing to the Lord. But why was this permitted? or why was it recorded? It is certain that thousands through successive generations have, by this fall of the man after God's own heart, been prejudiced against true religion, hardened in infidelity, or emboldened to blasphemy: whilst others have thence taken occasion to commit *habitual* wickedness under a religious profession, and with presumptuous confidence, to the still greater discredit of the gospel. But these persons have all been previously, either open enemies of, or hypocritical pretenders to religion: and it is the righteous purpose of God, that stumbling-blocks should be thrown in the way of such men, that they may stumble, and fall, and be snared, and taken, and perish: it is his holy will thus to detect the secret malignity of their hearts, and to make way for the display of his justice, in their condemnation. On the other hand thousands, from age to age, have by this awful example been rendered more suspicious of themselves, more watchful, more afraid of temptation, more dependant on the Lord, and more fervent in prayer: and by means of David's fall have been preserved from falling. Numbers, who have been overcome by temptation, have thereby been preserved from despair: every upright soul will *eventually* derive benefit from the impartial record of this event; and none will finally be injured by it, except those, who desire an excuse for sin, or an objection to the religion of the Bible. Bees will collect honey, and spiders poison from the same plants, according to their different natures. No excuse can be made for David; he attempted none for himself: and much self-knowledge is requisite to account for his conduct, or to deem it possible, that a godly man, who had so long enjoyed communion with God, in the highest exercises of fervent devotion, could commit such enormous crimes, and continue so long impenitent. But the Lord's design in leaving his servant to himself was doubtless wise, righteous, and merciful; whether we can see it, or not. He hath been pleased to permit some of the most eminent of his people, to fall very grievously: and if we make a proper use of such instances, our own experience will effectually convince us, that he can educe much good from all this evil. The glory of all the good is his due, the blame of all the evil, *original*, or *consequent*, belongs to those, who committed it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Either *personal experience*, or *repeated experiments* are necessary, to convince us of the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of our own hearts: and this conviction is of vast importance, in order to the proper exercise of repentance, faith, and every Christian temper. By *the latter method*, the Lord hath evinced to all, who duly attend unto his word, that every enormity dwells in every human heart; and that we are all of us capable of committing any crime, which men ever practised, or conceived; if exposed in certain circumstances to suitable temptations, and left to the natural tendency of our depraved affections. Many have thought themselves *incapable* of some particular sin, they have felt no inclination to it, but a horror, and detestation at the thoughts of it; and yet they have afterwards committed it with greediness, and apparent satisfaction. Neither eminent piety, a long and close walk with God, habits of obedience, and of the government of the passions, the sobriety of advancing age, peculiar obligations from God, great reputation, and usefulness, clear knowledge of the divine law; nor even the spirit of prophecy, have been found capable of extirpating the most hateful propensities of the human heart: though restrained, dethroned, and crucified, they have still lived; and have revived, obtained advantages, and for a season *seemed to reign* with the most dreadful tyranny. Who then are we, that we should deem ourselves secure? All these evils exist in our hearts, and are capable of being excited again, though at present they seem to be extinct. We are never safe in this world; never out of the reach of temptation; never exempted, in respect of any sin, from the necessity of watchfulness, prayer, and dependance upon the grace of God. Let us not then be high-minded; but may God help us to pass the time of our sojourning in this world, in humble, jealous fear. But the declensions of true believers are commonly gradual: exemption from trials, and worldly prosperity induce habits of slackness in duty, and self-indulgence in lesser instances, and the soul contracts a slothful, careless, and unwatchful frame. Thus a man is drawn to the verge of prohibited gratification, and far beyond the bounds of expediency and moderation in things lawful: and when his passions have been accustomed to indulgence, he is the more easily tempted to evident evil. The eye, the ear, the outward senses are not turned away from forbidden objects; by these inlets the sinful imagination is excited, and concupiscence is produced in the heart. Perhaps it is hoped that the desire may be lawfully gratified, and on that vain pretence, it is allowed to dwell within. But when lust is conceived, every restraint generally increases it's vehemence: the

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AND the LORD ſent Nathan unto David: and he came unto him, and ſaid unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

thought of future conſequences, and the conſideration of the preſence, purity, and juſtice of God, are excluded; his fear and love, are out of exerciſe; his law and authority are diſregarded; and the enhanced imagination of the ſatisfaction, to be found in indulgence, poſſeſſes, and engroſſes the ſoul. Thus ſin is brought forth: and notwithſtanding palliations, and the hopes of concealment, and impunity, which had been previouſly framed; the mind ſoon is tortured with that dread of future conſequences, which far outweighs all its pleaſures. But when the bait is ſwallowed, ſatan hath ſo caught the ſinner, that no power, except that of God can deliver him, or prevent his being ſtill more entangled. The fear of contempt, and of diſgracing the cauſe of religion combine in exciting a man to deviſe methods of concealment; and ſuch thoughts for a ſeaſon exclude others of much greater importance, and afford ſatan an opportunity of tempting him to ſtill further iniquities. Double attention is required to conceal ſin, than would have ſufficed to prevent it; and the conſcience once corrupted makes feeble oppoſition, to fraudulent meaſures of preſerving the reputation, or preventing the conſequences of tranſgreſſion. Every conceſſion hardens the heart, and provokes the departure of the Holy Spirit. The end being conſidered neceſſary, means of every kind, which promiſe ſucceſs, ſeem needful alſo: and when a man's obligations to the Lord are forgotten, no marvel if all the tyes of juſtice, gratitude, and friendſhip to men, are diſregarded. To impoſe upon their credulity, and confidence, to injure them in their property, reputation, and connexions, and to tempt them to commit ſin, are obvious, and common meaſures: and when any one hath thus far given place to the devil, what ſhall prevent his being puſhed forward, by the ſame influence, and out of the ſame motives, to treachery, malice, and murder; till crimes are multiplied, and magnified beyond computation; and till every nobler conſideration be extinguiſhed? If the heart, and conſcience be thus ſtupified, it will be eaſy for the ſame artful enemy to amuſe the deluded offender, with ſome form of godlineſs, ſome palliation, or cloke of iniquity, which ſhall quiet every riſing ſcruple: and ſucceſs in ſuch a courſe may even be conſidered as a divine ſanction, and induce the language of indifference, or of infidelity: whilſt the heart is rendered callous, when cruelty is connected with the attainment of the end propoſed. But can a real, and eminent believer ever tread this downward path, and thus fall aſleep in the arms of ſatan? Can ſuch a perſon, who hath committed ſuch atrocious crimes, and ſo long remains impenitent, be indeed a child of God, a member of Chriſt, a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and an heir of eternal glory? Can one ſpark of divine life exiſt unextinguiſhed in ſuch an ocean? It is plain that theſe things are poſſible: but no man in ſuch a caſe can have warranted evidence to conclude that he is a believer: the higher a man's confidence is, who hath ſunk thus low in wickedneſs, the greater proof will there be of his preſumption, and hypocriſy: though grace be not loſt in ſuch an awful caſe, the aſſurance, and conſolation of it muſt be ſuſpended. Let not then any vile hypocrite, who reſembles David in nothing but his tranſgreſſions, and who adds the habit of allowed ſin to all other aggravations, bolſter up his confidence with this example: let him firſt imitate David's humiliation, repentance, and other eminent graces, before he think himſelf, or require others to conſider him, a backſlider. Let no oppoſer, or deſpiſer of the truth object and ſay, are theſe the fruits of faith, and devotion? We anſwer no: they are the effects of a corrupt nature, whoſe tendency to evil muſt be amazing ſtrong, to overcome the contrary tendency of truth and grace, in the heart of an eminent ſervant of God. Let us all watch, againſt the beginnings of negligence, and ſelf-indulgence, and keep at the utmoſt diſtance from that precipice, whence David fell: let us beg of God to cloſe our ſenſes, imaginations, and affections to all forbidden objects, thoughts, and deſires: let us ſtudy moderation, expediency, and ſuperiority to all animal inclinations, in things lawful: and let us continually attend to our proper work, and pray always, that we may not be led into temptation: then will our lives beſt ſhew the tendency of our principles, and confute thoſe, who accuſe us of encouraging men to ſin by the freeneſs of goſpel ſalvation. But again; is it poſſible that ſuch a backſlider from God can be recovered, and admitted to comfortable communion with him again? Doubtleſs it is: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption; and he will caſt out no humble, penitent believer, whatever his former crimes have been: nor will he ſuffer ſatan to pluck any of his ſheep out of his hand. Let then thoſe, who are fallen, return to the Lord without delay, and ſeek forgiveneſs through the Redeemer's atoning blood. Yet the Lord will recover his people in ſuch a way, as ſhall effectually mark his abhorrence of their crimes, and deter all who regard his word, from abuſing the encouragements of his mercy. And how poor is every ſucceſs, and gratification, when the Lord is diſpleaſed with us! and in this world, or the next he will ſurely expoſe us to ſhame for our crimes. It is alſo very painful to obſerve how the ſins of believers quiet the conſciences, and rejoices the hearts of wicked men, who are ready to inſult and ſay, art thou alſo become as one of us? But whilſt many will thus abuſe theſe humiliating inſtances: may we be unfeignedly thankful, if we have been reſtrained from ſuch dreadful falls; may we commit our ſouls to him, who is able to keep us from falling! may we take warning by David's ſins, and imitate the generoſity, ſelf-denial, and attachment to the cauſe of Iſrael, of the gallant, and much-injured Uriah.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—5.] When the Lord was diſpleaſed with his ſervant David, he did not ſend ſore judgments upon him; but a prophet to him, to bring him to repentance. Nathan did not go of his own accord, and in his own name to reprove David for his offences: but when he was ſent by the Lord, he plainly delivered his meſſage; without being induced, by his royal authority, his eminent character as a ſaint, and pſalmiſt, or his own peculiar affection for him, to conceal, or mutilate it. This probably was ſoon after the birth of David's ſon by Bath-ſheba; when theſe ſcandalous tranſactions began to be generally

2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor *man* had nothing, ſave one little ewe lamb, which he had bought, and nouriſhed up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his boſom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he ſpared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dreſs for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dreſſed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled againſt the man; and he ſaid to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* ſhall ſurely die:

6 And he ſhall reſtore the lamb fourfold, becauſe he did this thing, and becauſe he had no pity.

7 And Nathan ſaid to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I anointed thee king over Iſrael, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul:

8 And I gave thee thy maſter's houſe, and thy maſter's wives into thy boſom, and gave thee the houſe of Iſrael and of Judah; and, if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee ſuch and ſuch things.

9 Wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his ſight? thou haſt killed Uriah the Hittite with

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noticed: but whatever others whiſpered, and circulated, David ſeems not to have been in any due meaſure ſenſible of his exceeding wickedneſs, until the Lord alarmed his conſcience by his prophet. In order to inſinuate the truths, which he was to deliver, without exciting the reſiſtance of David's partial ſelf-love, and to induce him to be council againſt himſelf, before he was aware, Nathan introduced his meſſage with a parable: (*Note Judg.* c. ix. v. 7—15.) Several expreſſions here made uſe of, might have excited a ſuſpicion, that ſomewhat more was intended, than merely pleading the cauſe of an injured poor man, againſt his wealthy oppreſſor: yet David ſuppoſed it to be matter of fact, till Nathan made the application. The rich man, who had many flocks, and herds, repreſented David with his many wives, and concubines: the poor man, with his ewe lamb, which was ſo tenderly brought up by him, was Uriah, with his one well-beloved wife: the traveller may mean the ſenſual luſt, which entered, and was welcomed in David's heart; and which nothing could ſatisfy but the wife of Uriah. But this parable repreſented only a ſmall part of the enormity of David's conduct: Uriah's loyal, and gallant ſervices; and David's treachery to, and murder of him and others, were not ſo much as alluded to in it: his injury to Uriah, and Bath-ſheba in the adultery, were alone ſhadowed forth; for perhaps the prophet meant to bring him by degrees to a view of his exceeding ſinfulneſs. But David, forgetful of his own crimes, was fired with indignation againſt the imaginary offender, and with a ſolemn oath condemned him, not only to make legal reſtitution, but to ſuffer death. The circumſtances of the ſuppoſed offence might deſerve more than ordinary puniſhment: yet the exceſſive ſeverity of this ſentence was the natural effect of the unhumbled ſtate of David's heart.

V. 7. *Thou art*, &c.] Though Nathan had not brought David to make the application of the parable to himſelf; yet he had gained a great point, in bringing him to pronounce ſo ſevere a ſentence againſt a ſuppoſed offender, for crimes of far inferior malignity to his own. He therefore, with great firmneſs, and courage, addreſſed David's conſcience; and aſſured him, that he was the very perſon, whoſe conduct had been delineated, and whoſe ſentence had been denounced out of his own mouth: and he then proceeded in a very plain, convincing, and even ſevere diſcourſe, to ſhew the extent, aggravations, and effects of his guilt.

V. 8. *Thy maſter's wives*, &c.] According to the cuſtom of the eaſtern kingdoms, the ſucceſſor to the crown obtained poſſeſſion of the women belonging to the preceding king: David therefore having ſucceeded Saul, his former maſter, had acquired a property in his wives and concubines: but we do not read, that he actually cohabited with any of them; and as Saul was his father-in-law, it ſeems probable that he did not, though he might marry ſome of the women belonging to Saul's court: however the Lord's giving David *in his providence*, the wives of Saul, was no more a divine approbation of his polygamy, than his giving Iſrael a king, proved that they did well in deſiring, and aſking one. And the Lord is alſo ſaid to give David's concubines to Abſalom, (v. xi.) But the multitude of unmarried women, of whom David had it in his power to make choice, aggravated his guilt in ſeizing upon the wife of another man.

If that had been, &c.] If David thought that any thing conducive to his comfort was yet wanting, he was allowed to aſk for it, and the Lord would not have denied it, if he ſaw it good for him: of this his former love was a convincing proof.

V. 9. *Wherefore haſt thou*, &c?] The paſſage may be rendered, "wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the word of the "Lord?" his promiſes, as well as his precepts. David, *in this inſtance*, had ſhewn, that he thought the general, and ſpecial promiſes of God either too ſcanty, or too precarious, to ſuffice for, and to enſure his felicity; or he need not have ſought ſatisfaction in another way: and this was a dreadful contempt of them: he had alſo treated the commandments of God as rigorous, and needleſs reſtraints upon his inclinations; and as worthy to be neglected, diſpenſed with, and trampled on, when they interfered with

the ſword, and haſt taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and haſt ſlain him with the ſword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the ſword ſhall never depart from thine houſe; becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed me, and haſt taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11 Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will raiſe up evil againſt thee out of thine own houſe, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he ſhall lie with thy wives in the ſight of this ſun.

12 For thou didſt *it* ſecretly: but I will do this thing before all Iſrael, and before the ſun.

13 And David ſaid unto Nathan, I have ſinned againſt the LORD. And Nathan ſaid unto David, The LORD alſo hath put away thy ſin; thou ſhalt not die.

14 Howbeit, becauſe by this deed thou haſt given great occaſion to the enemies of the LORD to blaſpheme, the child alſo *that is* born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his houſe: and the LORD ſtruck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very ſick.

16 David therefore beſought God for the child; and David faſted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his houſe aroſe, *and went* to him, to raiſe him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

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his preſent gratification. Thus he deſpiſed the word of the Lord: but he could not poſſibly give a good reaſon for ſo evil a thing.

V. 10 *Deſpiſed me*, &c.] When David deſpiſed the word of the Lord, he deſpiſed the Lord himſelf: his power, and authority, his juſtice and purity, his omnipreſence, and omniſcience, his favour, and wrath, and all his glorious perfections: elſe he would not thus have offended God, for the baſe gratification of his luſts, after all his knowledge of, and communion with him. This was an aggravation of his crimes, which is leſs obvious to our natural apprehenſions, but far more full of malignity, than all thoſe, which were enumerated in the former chapter. As the parable had particularly repreſented the evil of David's adultery, the addreſs of Nathan is moſt pointed againſt his murder of Uriah. We ſhall have the beſt commentary upon the threatenings of this paſſage in the ſubſequent hiſtory.

V. 11. *Before thine eyes*, &c.] David was not preſent at Abſalom's villainy; but it was committed in ſo ſhameleſs a manner, that it was as notorious, as if he had ſeen it with his own eyes. The Lord raiſed up this evil out of his own houſe: yet he did not put the wickedneſs into the hearts of his ſons; but he left them to their own vile paſſions, and over-ruled the effects of them for David's chaſtiſement.

V. 13. *I have ſinned*, &c.] The dormant ſpark of divine grace in David's heart now began to rekindle: before this plain ſtatement of facts in the name of God, all his evaſions vaniſhed, and his guilt appeared in all its magnitude. He did not therefore reſent the pointed rebuke of the prophet, nor attempt any palliation of his conduct; but in deep humiliation of heart confeſſed; "I have ſinned "againſt the Lord." The words are few; but the event proved them to have been the language of genuine repentance; which regards ſin, as committed againſt the authority, and glory of the Lord, whether or not, it have occaſioned much evil to our neighbour. Immediately Nathan aſſured him, "that the Lord had put away his ſin, "and that he ſhould not die." Murder, and adultery were crimes, to be puniſhed with death: and though no Iſraelite had authority to execute this ſentence upon the Lord's anointed; yet David might juſtly fear that the Lord would cut him off by ſome ſudden judgment: but the prophet without delay informed him, that he ſhould not thus be put to death, and intimated to him, that the eternal puniſhment alſo would be remitted.

V. 14. *Great occaſion*, &c.] Perhaps the Ammonites, and other idolatrous enemies of God, and Iſrael, had received information of theſe ſins of Jehovah's highly favoured ſervant, and zealous worſhipper, and blaſphemed his name on that account: and the wicked Iſraelites, eſpecially of Saul's party, would reflect upon the divine juſtice, in that Saul had been rejected for *apparently* leſſer crimes, and David was ſpared notwithſtanding theſe enormities. But the Lord did not puniſh Saul above his deſervings, and therefore did him no injuſtice in forgiving David: and he judges not merely by the outward action, but by the inward diſpoſition of the heart; and there he perceived a very important difference, and even contrariety, in the two characters. This obvious remark ſolves many difficulties of this kind to the humble enquirer. However in the temporal puniſhment of David in his family, the Lord determined to ſilence theſe blaſphemies; and he began by the death of the child, which Bath-ſheba had born to him. This providence, though eventually a mercy to all parties, yet being predicted, and publicly declared to be a rebuke for David's ſin, would be for the time a ſharp and painful chaſtiſement.

V. 15. *And Nathan departed*, &c.] The prophet having delivered his meſſage returned home probably to pray for the king: and David retired, and poured out his ſoul in godly ſorrow, and ingenuous confeſſions; and perhaps immediately penned, and ſoon after publiſhed the 51ſt Pſalm, which forms a complete example, and ſtandard of true repentance.

V. 16. *Beſought God*, &c.] David might hope that there was a ſecret condition in the threatening; and that

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba, his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon; and the LORD loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together,

upon his humiliation, attended by fasting, and prayer, the child might yet be spared: he considered the infant as an innocent sufferer for his crimes; (c. xxiv. v. 17;) he had doubtless a very great affection for it; his spirit was at that time peculiarly tender; and perhaps Bath-sheba likewise was overwhelmed with a load of guilt, and sorrow, (v. 24.) On all these accounts he thus humbled himself before God, and sought the life of the child, though it would have lived a monument of his sin, and shame.

V. 18. *On the seventh*, &c.] That is, say some, from the child's birth; and this was an additional rebuke to David, as it died uncircumcised. But perhaps the continuance of it's sickness, and of David's sorrow and mortification are meant thereby.

V. 20. *And worshipped*, &c.] By changing his raiment, and going up to the house of God to worship, he publicly expressed his acceptance of the chastisement, and submission to the will of the Lord; and his gratitude to him for sparing his life.

V. 21—25.] Whilst he had hopes of prevailing, humble fasting, and prayer formed the present duty: but after the event, chearful submission to the divine appointment was required of him. He could not profit the child, and he might injure himself, and neglect his duty, by mourning for him; the child released from sufferings, and gone before him to a better world, was now no loser; the public sustained no detriment, as in the death of useful persons; and there remained no farther reason for sorrow, except he should quarrel with the will of God: this he would not do, but rather prepare to follow, and hope to meet him in the world above.

V. 24, 25.] David's marriage with Bath-sheba was sinful, as it was conducted; nevertheless it was not afterwards to be disannulled: and in the mystery of the divine counsels, it made way for the performance of God's promises, (c. vii. v. 12;) and Bath-sheba has her name inserted in the genealogy of the Redeemer! As a token of the Lord's reconciliation to David and Bath-sheba, this son by her was named Solomon, or the peaceable; and Jedidiah, or beloved of the Lord, because of the Lord's peculiar favour to him: though he was not ordinarily called by that name.

V. 26—31.] Probably this event took place before the birth of the former child. The Lord was very gracious to David, in thus prospering his arms, notwithstanding his manifold offences: and Joab approved himself very faithful to David, and attentive to his reputation. The crown of the king of the Ammonites is said to have weighed a talent; but that being about a hundred weight, seems enormous: probably it means the value of it, with the precious stones. David seems to have been too much pleased with this crown: whereas, *his anointing*, as the king of the Lord's people, was a far more honourable distinction. It is not certain what the punishments were, which he inflicted upon those Ammonites, whom he took prisoners: whether he put them to death, under saws, axes, harrows, &c. or whether he condemned them to wear out their lives in severe bondage, in various labours. He meant to punish their cruelty to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and their contempt of his ambassadors: but if there was, as seems probable, an undistinguishing severity exercised by him towards them, we must ascribe it to the state of his mind at that time. (1 *Chron.* c. xx. v. 1—3.)

gether, and went to Rabbah, and fought againſt it, and took it.

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, (the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold, with the precious ſtones,) and it was *ſet* on David's head: and he brought forth the ſpoil of the city in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under ſaws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them paſs through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jeruſalem.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our falls are of ourſelves, but our recoveries are from the Lord: and he ordinarily makes uſe of the miniſtry of the word in bringing ſinners to repentance; and the plain authoritative declaration of the divine law, and of the evil nature, and effects of ſin, is the appointing method of awakening the careleſs conſcience, and of bringing men to condemn themſelves. In ſome caſes great prudence, and addreſs are neceſſary in delivering the Lord's meſſage, eſpecially to thoſe in exalted ſtations: and illuſtration often forms the moſt compendious, and effectual method of producing conviction. It is well when ſuch an indirect addreſs will ſpare the painful neceſſity of more explicit reproofs: but ſelf-flattery renders us quickſighted to the leſſer faults of others, and blind to our own moſt atrocious offences: and in proportion as men are tender to their own ſins, they will be unreaſonably ſevere in animadverting upon thoſe of others. Hence ariſes the neceſſity of great plainneſs of ſpeech in the public miniſtry of the goſpel; that the conduct, and caſes of ſinners, of every deſcription, may be ſo explicitly declared, that every one's conſcience may ſay, "thou art the man." Nor is this perſonal, ſo long as the general caſes of multitudes are deſcribed, and the *peculiarities* of an individual's character are not ſo deſcanted on, as to draw the general attention of the auditors from themſelves to him. But further, it is often neceſſary, *in private*, to be ſtill more explicit, and particular, with ſuch profeſſors, as will not underſtand the plaineſt public addreſs; and this without any reſerve, or reſpect of perſons, with all ſerioufneſs, energy, and expoſtulation. And it will never be well with the church of God, until ſecret lamentations over unreproved ſcandals, and abuſes, and private converſations concerning the faults of abſent perſons, be generally changed, by the miniſters of Chriſt, for ſuch faithful plain dealing with men in private: and they, who are of reputation, ought to take the lead, and to ſet the example in this arduous, but ſalutary buſineſs. The true miniſter's meſſage will comfort, or diſtreſs the conſcience of thoſe, who regard it, according as they are walking with, or contrary to God: nay the believer can expect no conſolation from a ſcriptural ſtatement of the truth, whilſt he is under the guilt and power of unrepented ſin; and if he obtain any, it is either through the miniſter's error, or unfaithfulneſs, or his own ill-grounded confidence. The marriage with one wife, who poſſeſſes the affections, is really a prevention of fornication: but variations from the original inſtitution commonly increaſe the force of the Paſſions, and introduce greater licentiouſneſs. Every former mercy increaſes the heinouſneſs of our tranſgreſſions: but the extent of the promiſes, and the Lord's readineſs to hear prayer, and to give every good thing to his people, peculiarly aggravate their guilt, when they hanker after forbidden gratifications. We need not wonder that men in general deſpiſe the Lord's truths, promiſes, and commandments; yea and the Lord himſelf, in his whole character, and in all his relations to them: when even eminent believers, in ſome inſtances, are capable of the ſame folly, and ingratitude. From this ſource all our ſins proceed: man's contempt of the infinite excellency, and invaluable favour of God; his diſregard to his authority, averſion to his ſervice, and enmity to his juſtice, and holineſs, give being, and malignity to every ſpecies of diſobedience; and are in themſelves utterly inexcuſable. But however iniquity may have prevailed, where there is true grace, there is alſo ſenſibility, and ſomewhat for the word of God to take root in: and the humbled ſinner will not be offended by, but thankful to his faithful reprover: and where there is true repentance God will not refuſe forgiveneſs. It is however grievous to think what great occaſion of blaſphemy to the enemies of God, the falls of his profeſſing people afford: yet none except the Lord's enemies will make this uſe of them: and the open confeſſions of ſuch offenders, their future conduct, their ſevere corrections, and their patience under them, will manifeſt the equity, and purity, as well as the mercy of God, in pardoning their offences; and will mark an eſſential difference of *habitual character, and diſpoſition* betwixt them, and unhumbled ſinners of every deſcription. The Lord often cauſes his offending people to read their ſins in their puniſhment; he openly puts them to ſhame for their ſecret offences; and by the ſufferings of thoſe, whom they moſt tenderly love, fills their hearts with the keeneſt anguiſh: and though others eſcape, they ſhall be ſure to ſmart in this world for their tranſgreſſions. Under ſuch rebukes they will be led to deeper humiliation, to chaſten themſelves with faſting, and to pour out more fervent and inceſſant prayers; and eſpecially for thoſe who are ſuffering on their account, and are unable to pray for themſelves. Yet the ſame principles will teach them to moderate their ſorrows for thoſe beloved objects, whom the Lord has taken from them, and to prepare the more diligently to follow them: and nothing ſhould induce them to neglect their preſent duty. Thus, as long as life laſts let the diſcouraged ſinner ſeek the Lord, humble himſelf before him, and pour out his prayers; if only able to ſay, "who "knoweth if God will be gracious to me." (*Jonah*, c. iii. v. 9.) They, who are ignorant of the divine life, cannot comprehend the reaſons of a believer's conduct in his varied experiences: they will miſtake deep humility, and fervent prayer, for impatience, and an inordinate love to created objects; and acquieſcence in the Lord's will, and chearful gratitude under ſharp trials will be deemed indifference, and apathy: and in a thouſand different ways

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CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Amnon David's son committing an incestuous rape on Tamar, and driving her from him in hatred: and her grief and shame, v. 1—19. 2d. Her brother Absalom's resentment, and murder of Amnon, v. 20—29. 3d. David's grief; and Absalom's flight and absence, and his father's desire after him, v. 30—39.

AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin: and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made him-

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they will shew their incapacity to judge of the consistency, and reasons of his behaviour; (1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 14, 15.) But God accepts those services, which man censures; and a humble submissive spirit prepares the way for divine consolations, notwithstanding former crimes: and we should encourage the desponding hearts of our fellow sinners, with the comforts, that the Lord hath graciously afforded us: and when the heart is thus prepared, the message of the minister will again be peace and joy. Our prayers for our children are graciously answered, if some of them die in their tender infancy; (for they are well taken care of;) and the others live "beloved of the Lord." Vengeance will in due season be taken of the persecutors and abusers of God's people, and ministers; and in their severest sufferings the Lord will be righteous, though the instruments should be unreasonably severe. In proportion as we lose sight of the honour, that cometh from God, we shall become ambitious, and vain of worldly distinctions: and we shall be most compassionate, kind, and forgiving to our fellow sinners, when we most feel our need, and taste the sweetness of the Lord's forgiving love to our own souls. In whatever service the Lord may please to employ us, may we (as Joab with David,) execute his will faithfully, and then give him the whole glory without any reserve.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *After this,* &c.] Nathan's word began to take effect not very long after it was delivered, to mark the Lord's abhorrence of David's crimes. He seems to have been too indulgent of his children, and probably their mothers had a great share in their education, and *several of them* instilled into them bad principles; which is a natural effect of polygamy. But they appear to have been restrained by his example, influence, and occasional instructions, from open excesses, until he had committed those crimes, which have been considered. Notwithstanding his repentance, they would *naturally* consider his conduct, as a license to their youthful inclinations, and conclude that he could not greatly censure them, after he had set them such an example. Thus David might trace the sins of his children from his own misconduct, which would increase the anguish of the chastisement.

V. 2. *For his sister,* &c.] His sister by the same father, but of another mother. If Amnon had not *secretly* been habituated to licentiousness, surely he never could, in the *first* instance, have given way to so unnatural a passion. By gazing upon her beauty concupiscence was kindled in his heart, and being allowed it gained an entire ascendancy. He was not restrained from his base purpose by the fear of God, by conscience, shame, regard to the peace, or favour of his father, or to the reputation, virtue, or comfort of Tamar, or any foresight of evil consequences: but by reason of her modesty, and the care that was taken of her, he could not find an opportunity of getting her into his power. His passion therefore preyed upon his spirits, and impaired his health.

V. 3—5.] Amnon deemed Jonadab his friend, because he was his flatterer, and the caterer for his lusts. He was "a very subtle man;" a very crafty courtier, who readily discerned the inclinations of men, and was very ingenious in devising means for their gratification, to subserve his own interests. Observing Amnon to look more and more languid one day after another, he suspected the cause, and intimated to him, that a person of his rank might obtain his desires, if he went about it; thus he drew from him the shameful secret. Had he not interposed, probably his passion might for a season have been stifled, and at length supplanted by an affection for some other person. But when Jonadab understood the state of his mind, he speedily put him in a way of obtaining his wishes. Amnon was the heir-apparent of the crown, and David was growing old, and probably shewed Jonadab but little favour, though a near relation: he therefore paid his court to Amnon; and supposed that his rank and authority would bear him out in any crime, which he was disposed to commit.

V. 6—14.] This plot was laid very artfully. Amnon's sickly looks gave plausibility to his pretended illness: David's tenderness, and affection to his children were well

ſelf ſick: and when the king was come to ſee him, Amnon ſaid unto the king, I pray thee let Tamar my ſiſter come and make me a couple of cakes in my ſight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David ſent home to Tamar, ſaying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's houſe, and dreſs him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's houſe; and he was laid down. And ſhe took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his ſight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And ſhe took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refuſed to eat. And Amnon ſaid, Have out all men from me: and they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon ſaid unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which ſhe had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

11 And when ſhe had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and ſaid unto her, Come, lie with me, my ſiſter.

12 And ſhe anſwered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no ſuch thing ought to be done in Iſrael: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither ſhall I cauſe my ſhame to go? and as for thee, thou ſhalt be as one of the fools in Iſrael. Now therefore, I pray thee, ſpeak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice; but, being ſtronger than ſhe, forced her, and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; ſo that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her: and Amnon ſaid unto her, Ariſe, be gone.

16 And ſhe ſaid unto him, *There is* no cauſe; this evil in ſending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didſt unto me: but he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his ſervant that miniſtered unto him, and ſaid, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *ſhe had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with ſuch robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his ſervant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

19 And Tamar put aſhes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Abſalom her brother ſaid unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my ſiſter: he *is* thy brother,

known: perſons, who have been accuſtomed to indulgence, are naturally whimſical in their diet when ſick: David would be ſure to viſit him, and be diſpoſed to humour him in every thing; and would not ſuſpect ſuch a baſe deſign concealed under his requeſt: thus he would readily obtain David's conſent to Tamar's coming to him. Nor could *ſhe* have any ſuſpicion of ſuch horrid villainy from one, who *ſeemed* very ill, and in danger of death: but when he commanded all to leave the room, whilſt he eat of her cakes, ſhe might very juſtly have apprehended ſome bad deſign. Tamar's ſkill, and readineſs in ſuch ordinary employments, though a king's daughter; her compaſſionate attention to her half-brother; and all her anſwers and behaviour are ſuited to give us a very favourable opinion of her character. As her brother he ought to have protected, inſtead of injuring her: ſuch behaviour was peculiarly vile in an Iſraelite: it would for ever diſgrace and ruin her, and expoſe him to ſcorn and hatred, as one of the moſt abandoned of men. Her propoſal to him, to aſk her of the king, was meant to prevent preſent violence; for ſhe knew that David would afterwards protect her. And it is probable that ſhe accompanied her complaints, and expoſtulations, with unavailing outcries; which Amnon's domeſtics would diſregard: for ſhe ſeems to have been entirely free from blame in the ſcandalous tranſaction.

V. 15—18.] The determined conduct, and language of Tamar ſo irritated Amnon, that his pretended love was changed into the moſt vehement hatred: and without regarding her remonſtrances, he ordered to be turned out of doors, with every circumſtance of averſion, and abhorrence. This was doubtleſs an additional injury, and tended to publiſh her diſgrace, which might otherwiſe have been concealed: but we muſt attribute it to the confuſion, and diſtreſs of her mind, that ſhe ſtated this to be the greater injury: unleſs ſhe ſuppoſed that in ſo ſingular a caſe, he might, and ought to have married her.

V. 19, 20.] Tamar went home in the attire, and geſtures of an inconſolable mourner: doubtleſs her mind was filled with anguiſh; but perhaps ſhe meant thus to proteſt, that though ſhe was unfortunate, ſhe was not criminal. Abſalom diſſembled his reſentment, and perſuaded her to compoſe her mind, and not further to expoſe the ſhame of her family. It ſeems that Tamar lived all her days a ſingle, and a retired life.

Engravd for the Revd Mr. Scott's Family Bible.

C. R. Ryley del. Gugnion sculp.

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brother, regard not this thing. So Tamar remained deſolate in her brother Abſalom's houſe.

21 But when king David heard of all theſe things, he was very wroth.

22 And Abſalom ſpake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Abſalom hated Amnon, becauſe he had forced his ſiſter Tamar.

23 And it came to paſs after two full years, that Abſalom had ſheepſhearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beſide Ephraim: and Abſalom invited all the king's ſons.

24 And Abſalom came to the king, and ſaid, Behold now, thy ſervant hath ſheepſhearers; let the king, I beſeech thee, and his ſervants, go with thy ſervant.

25 And the king ſaid to Abſalom, Nay, my ſon, let us not all now go, leſt we be chargeable unto thee. And he preſſed him: howbeit he would not go, but bleſſed him.

26 Then ſaid Abſalom, if not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king ſaid unto him, Why ſhould he go with thee?

27 But Abſalom preſſed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's ſons go with him.

28 Now Abſalom had commanded his ſervants, ſaying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I ſay unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the ſervants of Abſalom did unto Amnon as Abſalom had commanded: then all the king's ſons aroſe, and every man gat him upon his mule and fled.

30 And it came to paſs, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, ſaying, Abſalom hath ſlain all the king's ſons and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king aroſe, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his ſervants ſtood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab the ſon of Shimeah, David's brother, anſwered and ſaid, Let not my lord ſuppoſe *that* they have ſlain all the young men the king's ſons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Abſalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his ſiſter Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's ſons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Abſalom fled. And the young man

V. 21. *He was very wroth*, &c.] Amnon's inceſt was prohibited by the law, (*Lev.* c. xviii. v. 9. c. xx. v. 17;) and it was added, that the offenders "ſhould be cut off," and "bear their iniquity;" but the magiſtrate was not *expreſsly commanded, to put them to death*, as in ſome preceding inſtances. Neither was he, who forced a woman, ordered to be put to death, unleſs ſhe was betrothed; becauſe otherwiſe he would be obliged to marry her. Perhaps theſe circumſtances united with David's paternal tenderneſs, and his conſciouſneſs of his own guilt, to ſatisfy his mind in leaving Amnon to the judgment of God, without inflicting puniſhment upon him. But certainly he ought to have manifeſted his diſpleaſure by ſome means or other; and this complication of crimes might have juſtified the ſevereſt puniſhment: but as David neglected his duty, the Lord afterwards took vengeance on him, in a way, which added ſtill more to his domeſtic trials.

V. 22—29.] Abſalom harboured the deepeſt reſentment of the groſs affront put upon himſelf, and the irreparable injury done to his ſiſter: but for two years he concealed his hatred under the appearance of indifference. But at length he deemed matters ripe for the execution of his determined revenge: according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, having flocks of ſheep, and making a feaſt when they were ſhorn, he formed his plot upon that circumſtance. To cover his deſign he invited his father to come to his feaſt, ſenſible that from prudential reaſons he would decline the invitation: but he thus obtained his approbation to Amnon's going with the reſt of his brethren: and David perhaps hoped that the reconciliation betwixt them would have been thereby cemented: and when he entertained no ſuſpicion, Amnon diſcarded all his likewiſe. Probably Abſalom was urged on the more reſolutely to the murder of his brother, becauſe he was the next heir to the crown, if Chileab were dead, as is generally ſuppoſed. His crime was aggravated, by being a breach of hoſpitality, and committed under the maſk of affection, in the preſence of his brethren, and by his father being drawn in *unintentionally* to be acceſſory to it: he involved his ſervants alſo in the guilt of murder, as if his command could warrant their tranſgreſſion of God's law: and he took the opportunity of killing Amnon, when he was drunk, or nearly ſo, as if he meant to murder body, and ſoul at once. We may ſuppoſe that Abſalom's ſervants fled with him, as they were not called to an account for the murder.

V. 32. *This hath been*, &c.] Jonadab probably was not in Abſalom's confidence: but being a ſubtle man, he had ſuſpected his malicious intentions. It would have been more profitable ſagacity, to have foreſeen theſe conſequences, and to have forewarned Amnon of them, before he had perpetrated the crime, which provoked this revenge.

that

that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill ſide behind him.

35 And Jonadab ſaid unto the king, Behold, the king's ſons come: as thy ſervant ſaid, ſo it is.

36 And it came to paſs, as ſoon as he had made an end of ſpeaking, that, behold, the king's ſons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept; and the king alſo and all his ſervants wept very ſore.

37 But Abſalom fled, and went to Talmai, the ſon of Ammihud, king of Geſhur. And *David* mourned for his ſon every day.

38 So Abſalom fled, and went to Geſhur, and was there three years.

39 And *the ſoul of* king David longed to go forth unto Abſalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, ſeeing he was dead.

V. 37—39.] Abſalom fled for refuge to the court of his mother's father (c. iii. v. 3:) and there he continued for three years. David did not demand him back, in order to puniſh him; but after a time wiſhed for his return, and to be reconciled to him. In this he too nearly copied Eli's example, and honoured his ſons more than the law of God; and therefore God made them his ſcourges, and then puniſhed them himſelf. However David's ſons were not *prieſts*, and ſo did not diſgrace the ſanctuary. He could not have proceeded againſt Abſalom, without condemning him to die; as Eli might have done by his ſons: and David's own blood-guiltineſs too much reſembling Abſalom's, (in that he murdered Uriah under the guiſe of friendſhip by the hand of others, after having previouſly tempted him to drunkenneſs,) enervated his reſolution, and diſpoſed him to lenity: but theſe conſiderations do not excuſe his conduct.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The judgments of God upon thoſe, who are finally ſaved, may be ſo terrible, varied, and continued, as effectually to proclaim his abhorrence of their crimes: and no reflecting perſon, with ſuch records before his eyes, would venture to commit iniquity, even if he could be ſure to eſcape eternal miſery: any more than a man would, for a trifling advantage, throw himſelf from a precipice, and break his bones, if he could be aſſured that his life would be preſerved: for he would be ſenſible, that he muſt ſuffer immenſe pain, and probably be a cripple all his days. The Lord *over-rules* the wickedneſs of men, (whilſt they are hurried on by their own luſts, and ſatan's temptations,) to accompliſh his own holy and righteous purpoſes. External accompliſhments are generally a detriment to the poſſeſſors, and a temptation to others: none ought to be vain of them, or to regret the want of them. So depraved is the human heart, that even natural affection may degenerate into licentiouſneſs: and the intercourſe betwixt near relations ſhould be conducted with caution, and prudence, that no opportunity may be given to thoſe, who are diſpoſed to commit iniquity. What men dignify with the name of love, is often a baſe, ſenſual inclination, entire ſelfiſhneſs, which triumphs over conſcience, and the fear of God, and without pity conſigns its object to irreparable diſgrace and miſery, for the ſake of a momentary animal gratification! How different from, yea contrary to, that love of others, which the law of God commands! Men's domineering luſts, when reſtrained from indulgence by external hindrances, become their tormentors, drink up their ſpirits, and diſorder their bodies: and probably the fury of ſinful propenſities, without any poſſibility of gratifying them, will form one dreadful part of the miſery of the damned: let the thought lead us to ſeek their mortification, that by the grace of God they may be extirpated from our hearts. But what would be the ſtate of this world, if every ſinner's power were equal to his inclination, for the commiſſion of wickedneſs? If indulged melancholy be improper for thoſe, who poſſeſs eminent ſtations, and great affluence in this world: how inconſiſtent is it with the profeſſions, privileges, and proſpects of the children of God: and if they are *lean from day to day in their ſouls*, it is commonly the effect of their yielding to ſloth, and worldly affections. When iniquity is conceived in the heart, all the powers of the underſtanding will be employed in deviſing how to effect it; and even ſickneſs will not always be ſufficient to take men off from their licentious purſuits. When ſuch debauched perſons, occupy exalted ſtations in ſociety, they will be attended by "very "ſubtle men," reſembling ſatan; ſagacious prompters to, and crafty adviſers in iniquity: theſe will aſſiſt them in overcoming the oppoſition of ſhame, and conſcience; and encourage them to gratify themſelves, without regarding truth, or juſtice, or the intereſts, or happineſs of others. Such are deemed, and treated as their friends, but the event will prove them to have been their moſt deſtructive enemies, merely for the ſake of their own emolument. Many violent but concealed evil deſires would be extinguiſhed, did not ſuch prompters diſcern, and draw forth the confeſſion of them, and contrive the method of their being gratified. Such plauſible villains know how to take advantage of the affection, candour, and modeſty, and unſuſpecting confidence of pious perſons, for the accompliſhment of their own infamous deſigns: and when iniquity is reſolved on, a perfect infatuation takes place, and all probable, or certain conſequences are forgotten. But ſilent abhorrence is the proper cenſure of ſuch abominable deeds of darkneſs; which are eſpecially horrible under the light of revelation: and even ungodly perſons will execrate thoſe, who perpetrate ſuch outrages againſt common decency; and they will appear as fools, and reprobates to their neighbours in general: what then will be the judgment, and ſentence of God reſpecting them! Senſual love ſoon changes into hatred, and concupiſcence into lothing: nor can it reaſonably be expected, that they, who make no ſcruple of debauching the perſons, for whom they *pretend affection*, will feel any remorſe at deſerting them with cruelty, and diſdain, at expoſing them to ſhame and con-

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CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1ſt. Joab, by the feigned complaint of a widow woman, inducing David to recal Abſalom, v. 1—24. 2d. Abſalom's beauty, and family, v. 25—27. 3d. His method of bringing Joab to him, by whom he was introduced to David, and received to favour, v. 28—33.

NOW Joab the ſon of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* towards Abſalom.

2 And Joab ſent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wiſe woman, and ſaid unto her, I pray thee feign thyſelf to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyſelf with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

3 And come to the king, and ſpeak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoah ſpake to the king, ſhe fell on her face to the ground, and did obeiſance, and ſaid, Help, O king.

5 And the king ſaid unto her, What aileth thee? And ſhe anſwered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine huſband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two ſons, and they two ſtrove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one ſmote the other, and ſlew him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is riſen againſt thine handmaid, and they ſaid, Deliver him that ſmote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he ſlew; and we will deſtroy the heir alſo: and ſo they ſhall quench my coal which is left,

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tempt, or at leaving them to all the horrors of penury, or proſtitution. Let no one ever expect better treatment from thoſe, who are capable of attempting their ſeduction. But whatever anguiſh, and diſtreſs may reſult from injuries received, nothing will eventually harm us, except our own voluntary iniquity: and it is better to ſuffer the greateſt wrong, than to commit the leaſt ſin, though apparently with impunity, and without rebuke. It is every one's duty to comfort, as he hath opportunity, thoſe who are in diſtreſs: but generally it is moſt adviſeable for injured perſons to be quiet, and leave their cauſe with God. When leſſer crimes eſcape puniſhment from man, more and greater will be committed: and the magiſtrate's anger againſt atrocious offences ſhould ſtimulate him to enforce the laws without reſpect to perſons: but others muſt neither attempt preſent, nor meditate future vengeance; for it belongeth not to them: if calm expoſtulations with the offender will do no good, our duty is to forgive, and pray for him; and not to give him another opportunity of injuſtice. But hatred, and revenge poſſeſs the hearts of ungodly men: and ſome are ſo artful, and malicious, that they defer their vengeance, and cover it with the appearance of affection, till they have an opportunity of executing it with more determined malignity. Often have feſtive interviews, and ſeaſons of ſenſual indulgence, been the choſen ſcenes for aſſaſſinations, and maſſacres; and men have been ſent into the eternal world from the midſt of their riot, and exceſs. Such is human nature, left to itſelf, armed with power, and emboldened by proſperity: what need have we then to pray for converting grace! No crime is ſo great, or evident, that men will not be found daring enough to commit, in order to pleaſe their ſuperiors: but alas! their command will not bear them out at the day of judgment, for violating the law of God. Evil tidings are generally enhanced: yet the imaginary calamity proves a real affliction for the time, and may ſerve the purpoſe of an humiliating chaſtiſement. Children are always uncertain comforts: but indulged children will ſurely prove croſſes to godly parents, whoſe fooliſh love for them induces them to neglect their duty to God: yet parental affection can ſcarce be extinguiſhed by any degree of miſconduct. But the caſe of thoſe parents is very deplorable, whoſe children copy their conduct in their crimes; and yet whoſe duty it is to puniſh them with great ſeverity for thoſe very imitations. Let this be a warning to us, to watch and pray againſt temptation, leſt by the miſconduct of one unguarded hour, we ſhould occaſion ſuch fatal conſequences to our offspring, and ſuch miſery to ourſelves, throughout our future lives. And let us not covet that worldly wiſdom, which, with all it's boaſted ſagacity, cannot prevent the deſtruction of thoſe, who are counſelled by it: but let us ſeek that heavenly wiſdom, which ſafely leads the poſſeſſor through all the dangerous paths of this life, to the perfect felicity of the eternal world.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 3. *So Joab*, &c.] Joab perceived that David deſired to recal Abſalom; but did not know how to do it, without diſgracing his character, and government: he therefore framed a plauſible ſtory, and employed an ingenious woman, in the character of a diſconſolate widow, to relate it to him. He intended to obtain a conceſſion from David, that in ſome poſſible caſes the puniſhment of a murderer might be diſpenſed with: and then to apply it to the caſe of Abſalom. Thus he hoped to ingratiate himſelf with both parties: and doubtleſs he would alſo be glad to increaſe the number of precedents for the impunity of murderers, when he lay under the guilt of that crime himſelf.

V. 6, 7.] This feigned caſe was very different from that, which it was intended to repreſent. It was indeed pretended that one brother had been ſlain by the other, and that the ſurvivor was expoſed to the ſentence of the law. But David had many other ſons, and the death of Abſalom would not have "quenched his coal, that was left:" that is, would not have deprived him of the comfort of children,

and ſhall not leave to my huſband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth.

8 And the king ſaid unto the woman, Go to thine houſe, and I will give charge concerning thee.

9 And the woman of Tekoah ſaid unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's houſe: and the king and his throne be guiltleſs.

10 And the king ſaid, Whoſoever ſaith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he ſhall not touch thee any more.

11 Then ſaid ſhe, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldeſt not ſuffer the revengers of blood to deſtroy any more, leſt they deſtroy my ſon. And he ſaid, *As* the LORD liveth, there ſhall not one hair of thy ſon fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman ſaid, let thine handmaid, I pray thee, ſpeak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he ſaid, Say on.

13 And the woman ſaid, Wherefore then haſt thou thought ſuch a thing againſt the people of God? for the king doth ſpeak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his baniſhed.

14 For we muſt needs die, and *are* as water ſpilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God reſpect *any* perſon: yet doth he deviſe means, that his baniſhed be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to ſpeak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* becauſe the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid ſaid, I will now ſpeak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the requeſt of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* deſtroy me and my ſon together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid ſaid, The word of my lord the king ſhall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, ſo *is* my lord the king to diſcern good and bad: therefore

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to ſucceed him in his inheritance. Abſalom had not ſlain Amnon, in ſudden anger, and haſty ſtriving, when they were alone; but in deliberate malice, and revenge, in the preſence of his brethren: there was no malicious proſecution carrying on againſt him by thoſe, who coveted his inheritance: but the law of God demanded his death, as a ſatisfaction to juſtice, and for a ſalutary example to all others. Had the caſe been drawn more ſimilar, it would have betrayed the deſign, and defeated Joab's purpoſe: and the ſtate of David's mind rendered it unneceſſary to be very exact; for he did not require a good reaſon, but a plauſible excuſe for following his inclinations, as Joab well knew.

V. 8—11.] It would not have anſwered the intent, had David only engaged to examine into the caſe; a preſent favourable deciſion was the object: this woman having therefore excited his compaſſion, urged her plea with great earneſtneſs; and aſſured him, that ſhe was ſo ſatisfied of the goodneſs of the cauſe, that ſhe was willing that all the guilt, if there were any, ſhould reſt upon her, and her father's houſe, and not upon David, or his kingdom. Thus ſhe engaged for what was out of her power; for the neglect of puniſhing murder would notwithſtanding bring guilt upon both king and people. However ſhe requeſted him to remember the Lord his God; that is, to give her the ſecurity of an oath, that he would ſpare, and protect her ſon; and he was prevailed upon to grant her requeſt. In this David acted more according to his feelings, than his judgment, and was very precipitate. If the party concerned, in the ſuppoſed caſe, were not deſerving to die, the city of refuge would have afforded him a ſafe retreat, and a fair trial; and if he deſerved death, David had no right to diſpenſe with God's law, by protecting him: and moreover he had examined no witneſs, *but one intereſted party*.

V. 13—17.] The woman, having thus far carried her point, proceeded gradually, and *ambiguouſly* to apply David's conceſſion, to the caſe of Abſalom; which was artfully deviſed, that ſhe might retract, or be more explicit, as he took it. She intimated that the king's ſeverity to his ſon was injurious to the people of God; and that he was wanting in his duty to the kingdom, in delaying to recal him: as if Abſalom were ſo excellent a young man, that all the hopes of Iſrael centred in him! She repreſented his flight to Geſhur, as a baniſhment, which had already been too ſevere a puniſhment of his offence. She pleaded the certainty of death, and the impoſſibility of recalling the dead to life again: by which ſhe would either inſinuate that Amnon would have died in ſome other way, if Abſalom had not ſlain him; or that the puniſhment of Abſalom would not bring him to life again; or that, as David himſelf muſt at length die, it was proper that Abſalom ſhould be recalled to ſucceed him. But whatever ſhe meant, it was nothing to the purpoſe; for God had commanded the death of the murderer, which exceedingly tends to the preſervation of the life of man, though it cannot raiſe the dead. She alſo pleaded the mercy of God, in ſparing, and re-admitting ſinful men into his preſence and favour, who were juſtly baniſhed from it; and yet he is no reſpecter of perſons: And perhaps ſhe referred to the return of the manſlayer to his inheritance, at the death of the High Prieſt. But God pardons none to the diſhonour of his law and juſtice; nor any who are impenitent, or to the encouragement of crimes, and the injury of others. Perhaps ſhe

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the LORD thy God will be with thee.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

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meant to hint, that the people expressed their dissatisfaction with Absalom's banishment so openly, that they made her afraid of an insurrection: but she *purposely* so confounded the feigned cause of her son, with that of Absalom, that part of her address is very obscure. However whilst she ventured to censure David for not gratifying himself, she took care repeatedly to give him many flattering commendations for his wisdom, and goodness, which in such a cause compensated for the weakness of her arguments.

V. 21. *I have done*, &c.] David was willing to suppose that his oath to spare the woman's supposed son, obliged him to recal Absalom, who was the person really intended; though he could not but perceive the insufficiency of her arguments, and the disparity of the cases. *As a favour* therefore he gave Joab permission to fetch home Absalom; and Joab appeared as thankful to the king for allotting him this service, as if David had done him the most expensive kindness: there was much of the courtier in all this.

V. 24. *Let him turn*, &c.] David perhaps meant to quiet his own conscience, and to silence the censures of others, by laying Absalom under some tokens of disgrace, and by denying himself the pleasure of seeing him. It might also be intended to humble him; but it entirely failed of producing that effect.

V. 25—27.] We hear no praises of Absalom's wisdom, justice, and piety: only of his beauty, and effeminacy; for such doubtless was his attention to his hair: and yet was he the admiration, and the favourite of Israel! His crimes were forgotten, and his accomplishments universally celebrated, which increased his arrogance, and issued in his ruin. His sons seem to have died before him.

V. 29. *He would not come.*] Either Absalom had not properly requited Joab for former services: or his popularity, and ambition made him regard him as a dangerous person, with whom he would not form any connexions; either out of regard to David's interest, or his own reputation.

V. 30—33.] Absalom's injurious, and hectoring treatment of so considerable a person as Joab; and his arrogant message to David, almost vindicating his conduct, and demanding justice, plainly shewed his character, intentions, and confidence in the favour of the people, and the ill-judged lenity of his father; and aggravated David's sin, and folly in receiving him into favour: for which he soon, and severely smarted.

32 And Abſalom anſwered Joab, Behold, I ſent unto thee, ſaying, Come hither, that I may ſend thee to the king, to ſay, Wherefore am I come from Geſhur? *it had been* good for me *to have been* there ſtill: now therefore let me ſee the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Abſalom, he came to the king, and bowed himſelf on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kiſſed Abſalom.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. Abſalom ſtealing the hearts of the people, and raiſing rebellion againſt his father, v. 1—12. 2d. David's departure from Jeruſalem, the fidelity of Ittai, and the grief of the people, v. 13—23. 3d. Zadok, and Abiathar ſent back with the ark, v. 24—29. 4th. Ahithophel reported to be amongſt the conſpirators; David's humiliation, and prayer; and Huſhai ſent back with directions how to ſerve him, v. 30—37.

AND it came to paſs after this, that Abſalom prepared him chariots, and horſes, and fifty men to run before him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behoves princes, and magiſtrates to be acceſſible, and to protect the deſtitute, and oppreſſed: yet the moſt amiable diſpoſitions muſt be under the government of diſcretion; or they will lead to improper conceſſions. Whilſt the wants of the poor are unheeded by many; the ſecret wiſhes of thoſe, who poſſeſs authority, and affluence, are diſcovered, and anticipated by crafty courtiers, and dependants, who ſeek their own intereſt by forwarding their indulgence: conſcientious ſelf-denial is therefore in ſuch a ſituation doubly difficult. If ſcruples, and fears deter great men from complying with their inclinations; ſome feigned precedent, ſome plauſible arguments, or ſome partial illuſtration will be deviſed, and ſpeciouſly ſuggeſted, to remove the hindrance. In *ſuch a caſe* the diſcerning favourite, perſonally, or by ſome well choſen inſtrument, will venture to find fault with his prince, or his patron; and to ſtate to him, that the public welfare, and the ſafety of the ſtate, or ſome other important intereſt demands thoſe meaſures, which he ſcruples to adopt: and by ſuch addreſſes to the paſſions, as are ſuited to his character, and diſpoſition, mixed with flattering commendations, and expoſtulations, he will cover the fallacy of his reaſonings, and the unlawfulneſs, and impolicy of that conduct, which he recommends. Thus many a one hath impoſed upon his own judgment, and conſcience, and ſuppoſed that he could not reſiſt ſuch urgent importunities, and ſuch cogent arguments; and that his conſent was extorted thereby; that to oblige ſuch kind friends, he had paſſed his word, and could not now in honour retract it: whilſt all the while he was overcome by his own inclinations, and only wanted a ſpecious excuſe for following them. If ſuch conceſſions be evidently contrary to the divine law, to the duty of his ſtation, and the intereſts of ſociety: it will readily be argued, that ſome exceptions, muſt be allowed of; that this was a ſingular caſe; that exactneſs would here be harſh, injurious, and of bad conſequence: and by ſuch ſophiſtical caſuiſtry may even wiſe and good men deceive themſelves, where their affections are previouſly engaged. Let us hence learn what need we have to keep cloſe to our rule of duty, to pray earneſtly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to watch againſt the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, and the bribery of our paſſions, and the agreeable poiſon of adulation. Sin hath ſo filled the world with miſery, that real caſes of diſtreſs may be found, more pitiable, than any, which the imagination can feign; and we ſhould readily endeavour to relieve thoſe, who are in trouble: but even compaſſion, amiable as it is, will not juſtify our violation of the moral precepts of God's word, or neglecting the important duties of our ſtation. With this ſingle exception, alleviating miſery is the nobleſt privilege, and employment of the great; who ſhould therein "remember the Lord their "God;" not only his authority, and their accountableneſs to him; but his compaſſion, and mercy to others, and to themſelves; and his juſtice and holineſs, who in his love to ſinners manifeſts moſt conſpicuouſly his abhorrence of their crimes. As all muſt needs die, and there is no recal from the tomb by human power, we ſhould not ſpend our time in immoderate, unavailing lamentations for the dead; but ſhould be employed in preparing for our own diſſolution, and in ſeizing the fleeting opportunity of ſerving our generation. When we are moſt commended for our diſcernment, we generally act the moſt fooliſhly; for thoſe very praiſes cloud the underſtanding, and pervert the judgment: we deem it not neceſſary that perſons of ſuch acknowledged diſcernment ſhould waſte time in nice diſtinctions, and we can ſcarce refuſe to ſpeak comfortably to thoſe, who ſpeak ſo agreeably to us: and the effect of extravagant commendations on thoſe, who receive, and thoſe who beſtow them, is often *mutual deception!* In our treatment of children, or others, that have greatly offended, every method ſhould be uſed, that hath a tendency to mortify their pride, and, bring them to repentance; and the feelings of our hearts muſt be repreſſed, in aiming at this important object. But when high rank, early indulgence, impunity in crimes, flattering commendations, perſonal accompliſhments, and popular favour, concur to increaſe pride, and the Lord leaves a man to himſelf, it is inconceivable to what a pitch of arrogance he will arrive. Such an one will vindicate the baſeſt villanies, will treat all ſuperiors with contempt, and all benefactors with ingratitude, and will overbear, and terrify all around him into compliance with his unreaſonable demands. But all this is the forerunner of deſtruction: and when parents, or rulers countenance ſuch imperious characters, they will ſoon experience the moſt fatal effects. The Lord grant unto us the inward beauty of holineſs, and the adorning of a meek, and quiet ſpirit: for favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; and they only, who fear the Lord, are truly excellent and happy.

2 And Abſalom roſe up early, and ſtood beſide the way of the gate: and it was *ſo*, that when any man that had a controverſy came to the king for judgment, then Abſalom called unto him, and ſaid, Of what city *art* thou? And he ſaid, Thy ſervant *is* of one of the tribes of Iſrael.

3 And Abſalom ſaid unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Abſalom ſaid moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any ſuit or cauſe might come unto me, and I would do him juſtice!

5 And it was *ſo*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeiſance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kiſſed him.

6 And on this manner did Abſalom to all Iſrael that came to the king for judgment: ſo Abſalom ſtole the hearts of the men of Iſrael.

7 And it came to paſs after forty years, that Abſalom ſaid unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD in Hebron.

8 For thy ſervant vowed a vow while I abode at Geſhur in Syria, ſaying, If the LORD ſhall bring me again indeed to Jeruſalem, then I will ſerve the LORD.

9 And the king ſaid unto him, Go in peace. So he aroſe and went to Hebron.

10 But Abſalom ſent ſpies throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, ſaying, As ſoon as ye hear the ſound of the trumpet, then ye ſhall ſay, Abſalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Abſalom went two hundred men out of Jeruſalem, *that were* called; and they went in their ſimplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Abſalom ſent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counſeller, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered ſacrifices. And the conſpiracy was ſtrong; for the people increaſed continually with Abſalom.

13 And there came a meſſenger to David, ſaying, The hearts of the men of Iſrael are after Abſalom.

14 And David ſaid unto all his ſervants that *were* with him at Jeruſalem, Ariſe, and let

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 6. *So Abſalom ſtole*, &c. This expreſſion aptly marks the way, in which Abſalom ingratiated himſelf with the people. He did not gain their affections by eminent ſervices, or by a wiſe, and virtuous conduct. But he affected to look great, and yet be very condeſcending, and affable to his inferiors: he pretended a great regard to the intereſts of the people, and threw out ſubtle inſinuations againſt David's adminiſtration: he flattered all, who had cauſes to be tried, with the aſſurance that they had right on their ſide; that, if it went againſt them, they might be led to accuſe David of injuſtice. Though he knew not how to obey, and deſerved to die for his crimes; yet he expreſſed a vehement deſire to be judge over all the land; and ſuggeſted, that their ſuits ſhould not then be ſo tedious, expenſive, and partially decided, as they now were: This he confirmed by apparent application; though it was to other people's buſineſs, and not his own duty. By ſuch ſiniſter arts, united with his perſonal attractions, and addreſs, he impoſed upon multitudes all over the land, to prefer ſo worthleſs a character to the wiſe, righteous, and pious David.

V. 7. *After forty years*, &c.] Theſe may be dated from David's firſt anointing, about ten or twelve years before he reigned at Hebron; which would bring us to about the thirtieth year of David's reign. But probably it is a trivial error crept into the text, and ſhould be read four years; that is from his being received into favour with David: who might have foreſeen theſe conſequences, and ſhould have checked and reſtrained the firſt appearance of his oſtentation.

V. 8, 9.] Abſalom knew that his father would be pleaſed to find, that he paid any regard to religion: and therefore he cloked his intended treaſon, and parricide with hypocriſy; pretending a vow made at Geſhur, which he had hitherto delayed to perform. He probably choſe Hebron, becauſe his father firſt reigned there.

V. 11. *They went*, &c.] As Abſalom went with David's approbation, and under the pretence of religion, theſe perſons, (who doubtleſs were of chief rank at Jeruſalem,) accompanied him, and undeſignedly countenanced his rebellion; and by involving them in the ſuſpicion of treaſon, he intended either to fix them in his intereſts; or to prevent David from placing confidence in them. In the mean time he took care to be proclaimed king all over the land, without mentioning whether his father was dead, or had reſigned, or admitted him to a ſhare of the authority: that whilſt David's friends heſitated in uncertainty, his party might become formidable.

V. 12. *Ahithophel*, &c.] This man poſſeſſed great abilities, and profeſſed much religion, and had been David's counſellor, and boſom friend: but he was now retired from court, perhaps in ſome concealed diſguſt; and he readily joined Abſalom's conſpiracy, and would have been the chief ſtay of it, had not God turned his counſel into fooliſhneſs. In many things he reſembled, and typified Judas the traitor.

V. 14. *Leſt he overtake*, &c.] At firſt ſight, in this meaſure, David ſeems to have acted inconſiſtent with his former intrepidity: but it doth not appear from the event to have been impolitic, and his friends did not object to

us flee; for we ſhall not *elſe* eſcape from Abſalom: make ſpeed to depart, leſt he overtake us ſuddenly, and bring evil upon us, and ſmite the city with the edge of the ſword.

15 And the king's ſervants ſaid unto the king, Behold, thy ſervants *are ready to do* whatſoever my lord the king ſhall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his houſhold after him: and the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the houſe.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his ſervants paſſed on beſide him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, ſix hundred men, which came after him from Gath, paſſed on before the king.

19 Then ſaid the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goeſt thou alſo with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a ſtranger, and alſo an exile.

20 Whereas thou cameſt *but* yeſterday, ſhould I this day make thee go up and down with us? ſeeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21 And Ittai anſwered the king, and ſaid, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, ſurely in what place my lord the king ſhall be, whether in death or life, even there alſo will thy ſervant be.

22 And David ſaid to Ittai, Go, and paſs over. And Ittai the Gittite paſſed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people paſſed over: the king alſo himſelf paſſed over the brook Kidron, and all the people paſſed over toward the way of the wilderneſs.

24 And lo, Zadok alſo, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they ſet down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up until all the people had done paſſing out of the city.

25 And the king ſaid unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and ſhew me *both* it and his habitation.

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it. The ſmall force, which he had with him, might be inſufficient to defend the city againſt Abſalom; and he might have no confidence in the inhabitants: or he might be unwilling to expoſe that populous, and *ſacred* city to the effects of a ſiege. He might deem it prudent to give the furious blaze of popular phrenzy time to ſpend itſelf, hoping that numbers would ſoon be ſenſible of their folly, and ingratitude: and perhaps conſcious guilt, the hand of God evidently lifted up againſt him, as had been predicted; the treaſon of his much beloved Abſalom, and the fickleneſs of the people, after all his paſt ſervices, damped his wonted courage, and rendered him leſs prompt for battle, eſpecially in ſo horrid, and unnatural a war.

V. 16. *Concubines*, &c.] David took his other wives, and his children with him: but ſuppoſing that theſe would be an additional incumbrance, and not apprehending that Abſalom would injure them, he left them to take care of his houſe: by which inadvertency the Lord fulfilled his prophetic denunciation, (c. xii. v. 11.)

V. 18—22.] Theſe ſix hundred men ſeem to have been a diſtinct body from the Cherethites, and Pelethites: they had accompanied or followed him from Gath, and were proſelyted Philiſtines, commanded by Ittai, of the ſame nation. They were numbered amongſt David's moſt faithful attendants, being attached to him by eſteem for his character, and love to his religion: and we may infer, that his ſojourning in the land of the Philiſtines was over-ruled for very important good to numbers of that nation. David was unwilling to expoſe Ittai, and his men, who were ſtrangers, and exiles in Iſrael, (having been driven with their families from Gath, for their affection to David, and his religion and people,) to ſo much hardſhip, and peril, as were now before him, and he would have diſmiſſed them with thanks and prayers for them: but their attachment to his perſon and cauſe was more ſtrong, than that of moſt of the native Iſraelites, and they were determined to cleave to, and ſerve him, at all events.

V. 23. *The brook Kidron*, &c.] Chriſt paſſed this ſame brook, in his way to the garden, at, or near the mount of Olives, the evening before his crucifixion. Though the multitude favoured Abſalom, yet many ſympathiſed with David: thus whilſt the general cry againſt Jeſus was, "crucify him, crucify him," there were thoſe, that wept for, and bewailed him.

V. 25. *Carry back the ark*, &c.] Abiathar was the High Prieſt, yet Zadok of the family of Eleazar was more noticed than he; for Eli's family was gradually declining. The prieſts and Levites were generally attached to David, which was honourable to them, and ſhewed that religion was in a flouriſhing ſtate. The preſence of the ark, and the High Prieſt would have been a comfort, and an apparent advantage to David: but the ark had been placed, and the ordinances of God eſtabliſhed, in Zion, and he would not derange that order: he was under the divine rebuke, and would expreſs his humiliation, and ſubmiſſion to it; and not aſſume, by the preſence of the ark, that

26 But

26 But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; behold *here am* I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.

27 The king ſaid alſo unto Zadok the prieſt, *Art not* thou a ſeer? return into the city in peace, and your two ſons with you, Ahimaaz thy ſon, and Jonathan the ſon of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderneſs, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jeruſalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by the aſcent of *mount* Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And *one* told David, ſaying, Ahithophel *is* among the conſpirators with Abſalom. And David ſaid, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counſel of Ahithophel into fooliſhneſs.

32 And it came to paſs, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worſhipped God, behold Huſhai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David ſaid, If thou paſſeſt on with me, then thou ſhalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city, and ſay unto Abſalom, I will be thy ſervant, O king; *as* I *have been* thy father's ſervant hitherto, ſo *will* I now alſo *be* thy ſervant; then mayeſt thou for me defeat the counſel of Ahithophel.

35 And *haſt thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the prieſts? therefore it ſhall be, *that* what thing ſoever thou ſhalt hear out of the king's houſe, thou ſhalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the prieſts.

36 Behold *they have* there with them their two ſons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *ſon*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *ſon*; and by them ye ſhall ſend unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Huſhai David's friend came into the city, and Abſalom came into Jeruſalem.

God was on his ſide, whilſt he was ſuffering for his ſins: but he would refer his cauſe to the Lord, either to bring him back to Zion in peace, or to let his unnatural, and ungrateful foes prevail againſt him; being conſcious, that he deſerved the worſt at the hands of God, though not from them. David's frame of ſpirit was excellent on this trying occaſion. It is not certain whether Zadok, who is called a "ſeer," was endued with the ſpirit of prophecy, or ſometimes enquired of the Lord in the place of the High Prieſt: or whether David only meant, that he was a perſon of remarkable ready diſcernment, and penetration, who could furniſh him with important, and authentic information by his obſervance of Abſalom's conduct.

V. 30. *Wept*, &c.] Theſe were expreſſions of his humiliation, and ſorrow for his ſins, and for the miſeries, which he had thereby brought upon himſelf, his family, and people. He thus humbled himſelf under the mighty hand of God, which he ſaw lifted up againſt him: and the people joined him with the ſame tokens of godly ſorrow and repentance.

V. 31. *O Lord*, &c.] David apprehended more danger from Ahithophel's capacity, than from the courage and numbers of Abſalom's followers: immediately therefore upon hearing, that he had joined the conſpirators, he oppoſed one ſhort ejaculation to all his wiſe counſels; and it was effectual. He prayed not againſt his perſon, but "that "his counſel might be turned into fooliſhneſs:" and they, who heard this prayer, could not but be much impreſſed with the anſwer, which it ſhortly after received. He afterwards worſhipped God in a more ſolemn manner, with his whole company.

V. 33. *A burden to me*, &c.] It ſeems, that David entirely confided in the fidelity, and prudence of Huſhai: but as he was not able perhaps to endure the fatigues of war, or was no ſoldier, he informed him, that in his preſent deſtitute condition he would burden him, and his friends, by attending him; and pointed out to him how he might better ſerve his cauſe, by remaining in Jeruſalem. Stratagems of war are lawful; for an enemy may as properly be out-witted, as overpowered: but the inſtructions given to Huſhai contain a falſhood, which perhaps cannot be wholly vindicated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

An oſtentatious emulation of equalling our ſuperiors in external pomp is an evidence of a narrow mind, a weak judgment, and a depraved heart. It is the common folly, and ruin of indulged children, and frequently prepares the way for the moſt atrocious crimes. The very firſt appearance, therefore, of ſuch affectation ſhould be repreſſed by parents with deciſion, and even with ſeverity, if they would prevent the ruin of their families. They are commonly moſt ambitious of authority, who leaſt underſtand it's duties and could leaſt endure it's burdens. But when ambition prompts, the moſt ſelf-indulgent will aſſume the appearance of diligence; and the moſt haughty, of affability, and condeſcenſion: and whilſt men aſpire to the pinnacle

CHAP XVI.

Contains, 1st. David deceived by Ziba, and granting him the eſtate of Mephiboſheth, v. 1—4. 2d. Inſulted by Shimei, and bearing it patiently, v. 5—14. 3d. Abſalom impoſed upon by Huſhai, and counſelled by Ahithophel, and publicly defiling his father's concubines, v. 15—23.

of earthly grandeur, they will, for the time, pay the moſt abject court to the meaneſt of the mob. Such fawning ſons of ambition are peculiar to no age or nation: but let every wiſe, and honeſt man ſhun them as a peſtilence. They make their way, by openly, or obliquely traducing the characters, or cenſuring the meaſures of their rulers; and the wiſdom, and perfection of an angel would be no ſecurity againſt their malignant inſinuations. As ſelf-love cannot but murmur at impartiality, and men will continue diſcontented, and fond of change, theſe demagogues will always have proper perſons, on whom to practiſe. By joining in their groundleſs complaints, they feed their diſcontent; by flattering their perſons, and approving their cauſe, they humour their pride; and by laviſh promiſes, (which coſt nothing, and mean nothing,) what they would do, if they were in power, they excite their ſanguine hopes of greater felicity: and by a voluble tongue, an inſinuating addreſs, perſonal accompliſhments, and conſummate impudence, they *ſteal* the hearts of the people, and prepare the way for popular tumults, inſurrections, and rebellion. For ſuch is human nature, that theſe arts, and attainments go much further in gaining the favour of the multitude, than wiſdom, and juſtice, truth, and piety, or the moſt important, and long continued ſervices. This is the old hackneyed way for men, deſtitute of conſcience, or honour, to work themſelves into important ſtations; and yet it is as much practiſed, and as little ſuſpected, as if it were a new diſcovery. No wiſe, and good man, therefore, ſhould on any account promiſe himſelf the continuance of popular favour; or be caſt down, if he meet with treachery, and ingratitude: yet in general we may perceive the righteouſneſs of God, in the baſeſt treatment, which we can receive from man; and may thence be reminded to humble ourſelves before him, and to expect all our happineſs from him. No villainy can be termed complete, which is not diſguiſed under the maſk of religion; eſpecially at thoſe times, when the profeſſion of godlineſs is treated with general reſpect. Pious perſons are glad to ſee others, and particularly thoſe, whom they moſt love, appear to be religious, and are not apt to ſuſpect them of hypocriſy: and this gives occaſion for the moſt ſcandalous, and pernicious deceptions. The policy of wicked men, and the ſubtlety of ſatan are exerted to the utmoſt in drawing in reſpectable perſons to give an unintended, and unſuſpected countenance to the baſeſt deſigns: by which thoſe ſentiments, and practices acquire regard, to which otherwiſe they were not at all entitled: and none ſo much ſtrengthen the hands of profligates, or infidels, as apoſtate profeſſors. Little dependance can be placed on earthly proſperity; and as little can be judged of cauſes, or characters by their ſucceſs; until the final event of things ſhall arrive. Our ſevereſt trials often come from thoſe, in whom we moſt confided; and our firmeſt friends are raiſed up from amongſt thoſe, from whom we had the leaſt expectations. But a real godly man will never be entirely excluded from uſefulneſs; ſome, wherever he abides, will have to bleſs God for his example, converſe, and prayers. In our moſt critical, and important concerns we ſhould not require ought unreaſonable from our friends; or bind heavy burdens on new converts, leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged: we ſhould be thankful for fidelity, and kindneſs from thoſe, who are not likely to be further ſerviceable to us; and ſhould recompenſe them with our earneſt prayers: and if the mercy and truth of God be with them, or with us, and ours, we ſhall be ſafe and eventually happy, however at preſent afflicted or ſeparated. But that love of the brethren, which is the fruit of the Spirit of Chriſt, when it is vigorous, will not be reſtrained, by the fear of hardſhip, danger, or death, from rendering aſſiſtance to thoſe, who are in affliction. We often in deſpondency think our enemies to be more, and our friends leſs numerous, than they are found upon trial: for our ſevereſt croſſes are lined with comforts, and point out to us cauſes for thankfulneſs. The miniſters of God ſhould always ſet an example of ſubmiſſion in things lawful; and of cordial attachment, and faithful adherence to thoſe princes, who protect, and countenance them in their pious labours; and eſpecially in thoſe ſeaſons, when others oppoſe, and revile them. It behoves us to humble ourſelves before God under the tokens of his diſpleaſure; and godly ſorrow, confeſſion of ſin, repentance, ſelf-denial, and ſelf-abaſement are the proper methods of ſeeking deliverance out of thoſe troubles, which are the chaſtiſements of our ſins. At ſuch a time therefore it is improper to buoy up our confidence, by the externals of religion, which do not always imply the gracious preſence of the Lord. If he pardons our ſins, and then again employs us, his houſe, and ordinances will be our comfort: and he will do us no wrong, though he throw us by, or cut us off by death, as though he had no delight in us. However nothing muſt prevent our worſhipping the Lord, though we have not acceſs to his more ſolemn ordinances; and as afflictions increaſe upon us, the fervency of our prayers ſhould alſo increaſe. Vain is all worldly wiſdom, and power, againſt the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man; in anſwer thereto, the counſel of the prudent is carried headlong, and the force of the potent is turned into perfect weakneſs. Some are uſeful in one way, and ſome in another, to one common cauſe, when they are cordially united: but alas! where ſhall we find wiſdom, and ſimplicity ſo united in any mere man, that we can perceive nothing that merits cenſure, and needs forgiveneſs? But when the Son of David was treated with all poſſible treachery, indignity, cruelty, and ingratitude, his wiſdom, meekneſs, candour, and patience were unalloyed perfection. His inexpreſſible ſufferings are now over, his humiliation is exchanged for the throne of glory, where unſeen he ſerves our cauſe in the world above. Him let us follow, cleave to, and ſerve in tribulation, in life, and death. We are left behind here amongſt his enemies, that we may promote his cauſe; and his inſtructions are, that we be "wiſe as ſerpents, and "harmleſs as doves."

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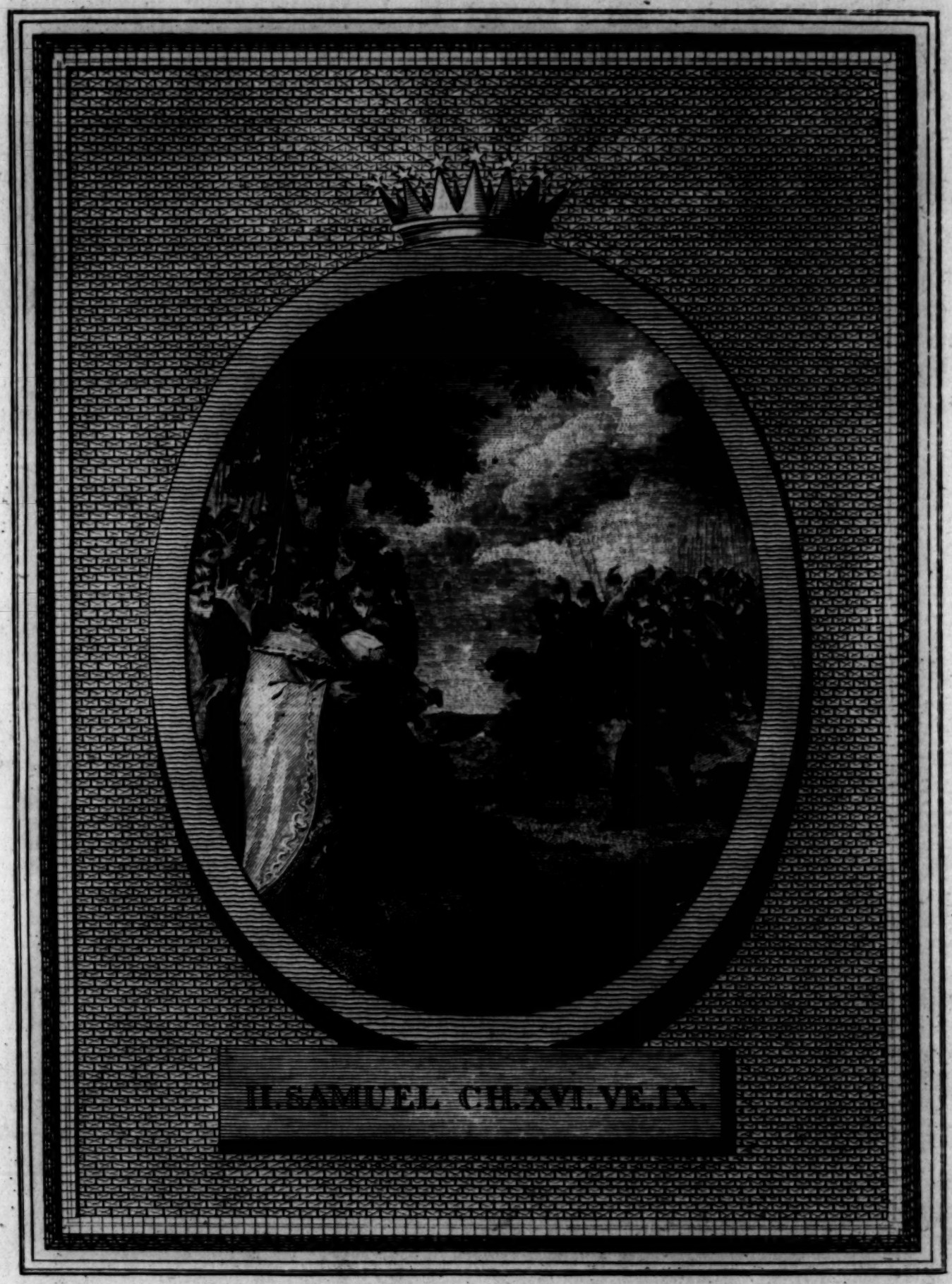

II. SAMUEL. CH. XVI. VE. IX.

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AND when David was a little paſt the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the ſervant of Mephiboſheth met him with a couple of aſſes ſaddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raiſins, and an hundred of ſummer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king ſaid unto Ziba, What meaneſt thou by theſe? And Ziba ſaid, The aſſes *be* for the king's houſhold to ride on; and the bread and ſummer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that ſuch as be faint in the wilderneſs may drink.

3 And the king ſaid, And where *is* thy maſter's ſon? And Ziba ſaid unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jeruſalem: for he ſaid, To-day ſhall the houſe of Iſrael reſtore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then ſaid the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephiboſheth. And Ziba ſaid, I humbly beſeech thee *that* I may find grace in thy ſight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the houſe of Saul, whoſe name *was* Shimei, the ſon of Gera: he came forth, and curſed ſtill as he came.

6 And he caſt ſtones at David, and at all the ſervants of king David: and all the people, and all the mighty men, *were* on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus ſaid Shimei when he curſed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Abſalom thy ſon: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy miſchief, becauſe thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then ſaid Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah unto the king, Why ſhould this dead dog curſe my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king ſaid, What have I to do with you, ye ſons of Zeruiah? ſo let him curſe, becauſe the LORD hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David. Who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?

11 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, and to all his ſervants, Behold, my ſon, which came forth of my bowels, ſeeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* Let him alone, and let him curſe: for the LORD hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his curſing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's ſide over againſt him, and curſed as he went, and threw ſtones at him, and caſt duſt.

14 And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreſhed themſelves there.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—4.] Ziba artfully formed, and ſucceeded in a plan for obtaining a grant from David of Mephiboſheth's eſtate. By his ſeaſonable preſent, and inſinuating behaviour, he prepoſſeſſed David's mind in his favour; and then, by his accuſation, he prejudiced him againſt Mephiboſheth. It was indeed improbable that Mephiboſheth ſhould prove ſo ungrateful, or form ſuch deſigns: but what villainy could excite wonder, when Abſalom was in arms againſt his too indulgent father? And Ziba might hope that ſome event would ſecure him from detection, or that David would be aſhamed to retract his grant, when he had once made it. However David acted too precipitately, and did injuſtice to Mephiboſheth, and even forgot his covenant with Jonathan, in thus paſſing ſentence, without hearing both ſides.

V. 5—18.] Bahurim was a city of Benjamin, Shimei was a relation of Saul, and the tranſlation of the kingdom to David marred all his proſpects of preferment. He diſregarded the expreſs appointment of God, and his heart was full of implacable enmity to David, as an uſurper of the throne. Contrary to the fulleſt evidence, he accuſed him of murdering Saul's family, and interpreted his affliction into a proof of his guilt; and took this opportunity to vent all kind of imprecations, and reproaches againſt him; and to expreſs all the rage of impotent malice. But if David had been a bloody man, and diſpoſed to ſlay the family of Saul, Shimei would ſoon have ſuffered the juſt puniſhment of his audacity. He indeed merited condemnation; but David was now under the divine rebuke for his ſins: though free from the guilt charged upon him, he was conſciouſly guilty of murdering Uriah: he therefore ſubmitted to the juſtice of God, in this injurious treatment from Shimei: he could not wonder that his enemies were ſtirred up againſt him; when his own ſon ſought his life. The ſin both of Shimei, and of Abſalom was from themſelves, and ſatan: but David's affliction was from the Lord; and they were but inſtruments,

15 And Abſalom, and all the people the men of Iſrael, came to Jeruſalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to paſs, when Huſhai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Abſalom, that Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, God ſave the king, God ſave the king.

17 And Abſalom ſaid to Huſhai, *Is* this thy kindneſs to thy friend? why wenteſt thou not with thy friend?

18 And Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Iſrael chooſe, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom ſhould I ſerve? *ſhould I* not *ſerve* in the preſence of his ſon? As I have ſerved in thy father's preſence, ſo will I be in thy preſence.

20 Then ſaid Abſalom to Ahithophel, Give counſel among you what we ſhall do.

21 And Ahithophel ſaid unto Abſalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the houſe; and all Iſrael ſhall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; then ſhall the hands of all that *are* with thee be ſtrong.

22 So they ſpread Abſalom a tent upon the top of the houſe: and Abſalom went in unto his father's concubines in the ſight of all Iſrael.

23 And the counſel of Ahithophel, which he counſelled in thoſe days, *was* as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: ſo *was* all the counſel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Abſalom.

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which the Lord employed, beſides their purpoſe, of correcting him for his good. The curſe cauſeleſs he knew could only injure him, who vented it: and his humble ſubmiſſion to ſuch baſe uſage from man, would he hoped, prepare the way for the return of peace and comfort from a merciful God: and therefore he would not permit Shimei to be moleſted.

V. 16—19.] Though Abſalom interpreted Huſhai's words into a promiſe of fidelity, and a tender of his ſervices, they did not neceſſarily imply them. He ſaid "Let "the king live," not "Let king Abſalom live." "He "would be his, and abide with him, whom the Lord, "and Iſrael ſhould chooſe:" but this was not Abſalom in the event; however it appeared for a time. "He would "ſerve in the preſence of the ſon, as in the preſence of "the father, &c." But whom would he ſerve? He would ſerve David in Abſalom's preſence, as faithfully, as when he was upon the ſpot. Had not Abſalom been blinded with pride, and popularity, he would have ſuſpected ſuch ambiguous words, when uſed by the known friend of his father, and not have admitted him amongſt his boſom counſellors. It is very hard to conduct ſtratagems without ſuch equivocations, if not direct falſhoods: and therefore it is beſt to keep at a diſtance from them, when we can.

V. 20—23.] Ahithophel was deemed as the oracle of God becauſe of his ſagacity; and at one time his profeſſions of piety ſeem to have been equally depended upon: but he was therein ſhamefully over-rated. He did not ſhew his wiſdom in joining himſelf to ſo vile a faction, headed by a raſh young man, of conſummate villainy, which foreboded nothing but ruin. But his confidence in his own wiſdom made him hope, that he could render it ſucceſsful: and his mind ſeems to have been much embittered againſt David. His hypocriſy now terminated in apoſtacy; and his firſt counſel to Abſalom, after his peaceable entrance into Jeruſalem, was more like an oracle of ſatan, than that of the Lord. For his own ſecurity, and that of the whole party, he intended to preclude all hope of reconciliation with David; that Abſalom might determine to conquer, or to periſh: and he put him upon an act of ſuch ſhameleſs wickedneſs, as was effectually ſuited to the purpoſe. As if he had been actually in poſſeſſion of the throne, in defiance of God's law, and of common decency, he defiled his father's concubines; and thus inflicted upon David the correction, which God had denounced, (ch. xii. v. 11.) So many women left behind, beſides all his wives, were by no means honourable to David: and probably they did not expreſs a proper degree of reluctance to ſo groſs an enormity. Abſalom ſignifies "the peace of my "father, or the father of peace," but never man leſs anſwered his name.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Selfiſh men are often very generous in diſpoſing of other men's property for their own advantage; and are great adepts in addreſs, and inſinuation: and flatterers are generally back-biters; for it is as eaſy to them to forge ſlanders of the abſent, as to pretend affection, and reſpect for the preſent: and thoſe ſervants, who purloin their maſter's ſubſtance, will commonly blacken their reputations. Though both adulation, and calumny are injurious to a great degree, yet the former is the moſt hurtful to the believer; for to be tempted to ſin is more injurious, than to be robbed of our riches, or even of our characters: and ſmooth ſpeeches and well-timed preſents often ſeduce even the wiſe, and righteous into improper conceſſions. When much treachery and ingratitude have been experienced, men are apt to become too ſuſpicious, and to liſten to every plauſible tale of calumny: the mind, when greatly agitated, views every thing through a falſe medium, and we are naturally moſt precipitate, when leaſt capable of judging aright: and thus godly men are unawares betrayed into indefenſible meaſures. But whilſt the diſſimulation of falſe friends occaſions ſin: the rage, malice, and contumely of cruel enemies call forth the exerciſes of the believer's graces, and often proves advantageous to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. Ahithophel's counſel rejected, and Huſhai's adopted, 1—14. 2d. Tidings ſent to David; and his paſſage over Jordan, 15—22. 3d. Ahithophel's ſelf-murder, and Abſalom's appointments, and progreſs, 23—26. 4th. David's entertainment by his friends, 27—29.

MOREOVER Ahithophel ſaid unto Abſalom, Let me now chooſe out twelve thouſand men, and I will ariſe and purſue after David this night.

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him ſhall flee, and I will ſmite the king only.

3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee; the man whom thou ſeekeſt *is* as if all returned: *ſo* all the people ſhall be in peace.

4 And the ſaying pleaſed Abſalom well, and all the elders of Iſrael.

5 Then ſaid Abſalom, Call now Huſhai the Archite alſo, and let us hear likewiſe what he ſaith.

6 And when Huſhai was come to Abſalom, Abſalom ſpake unto him, ſaying, Ahithophel hath ſpoken after this manner: ſhall we do *after* his ſaying? if not, ſpeak thou.

7 And Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, The counſel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.

8 For, ſaid Huſhai, thou knoweſt thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Wicked men judge of right or wrong by ſelf-intereſt; and count themſelves robbed of every expected advantage, which goes beſides them: it gratifies malevolence to inſult the afflicted, and to vent imprecations and reproaches: and when men think nothing of the authority, providence, or word of God in other reſpects, they are often very ready to interpret the afflictions of their neighbours, as divine judgments, in oppoſition to the cleareſt evidence. But it is good to ſee the hand of God directing, though not dictating, the injuries of men. Some ſimilar, or equal evil, or ſome appearance of evil, their falſe accuſations may ſuggeſt to memory, which calls for humiliation, watchfulneſs, and prayer: we deſerve worſe from the Lord than their moſt cruel, and contemptuous treatment, and we are authoriſed to conſider that as his correction: and if we bear humbly, patiently, and meekly for his ſake, the injuries of man, he will graciouſly requite us with inward peace and conſolation. Seaſons of peculiar humiliation before God, require peculiar long-ſuffering towards men: private revenge muſt never be indulged; and on ſuch occaſions it behoves us to be very reluctant in ſeeking the execution of public juſtice upon thoſe offenders, who have *only* injured us. Nay the Judge of the world, in his humiliation *for our ſins*, bare with, and prayed for thoſe, who reviled, and crucified him. Indeed a deep ſenſe of perſonal guilt, will ſoften the ſpirit towards others, and diſpoſe a man to be indignant, and ſevere againſt himſelf. (Compare 1 *Sam.* c. xxv. v. 21, 22.) And the moſt zealous friends are to be diſregarded, when they counſel what is evidently wrong. Men, who admire themſelves, will be eaſily deceived by thoſe, who profeſs an attachment to them: yet men readily diſcern thoſe faults in others, of which themſelves are moſt notoriouſly guilty. And if a diſciple of Chriſt commit evident wickedneſs, even profligates will exclaim, "Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?" But alas! how often might the Saviour himſelf addreſs theſe words to each of us, to our ſhame, and confuſion? And how often ſhould we thus check ourſelves, and remember our ingratitude, to our deeper humiliation? Deſtruction is before thoſe, who hearken to deceitful, and wicked counſellors: yet many young people, eſpecially in high life, will not regard any other! How deſperately wicked is the human heart, that can conceive, execute, and glory in thoſe deeds of darkneſs, which it is ſhocking to think of, and ſhameful to mention! yet all this might be educed from *our hearts* by ſucceſſive temptations, if ſatan and his agents were permitted to practiſe upon us! When great abilities, and daring wickedneſs unite in one character, they form the expreſs image of ſatan: and like that arch-apoſtate and rebel, ſuch men will ſpare no pains to puſh others forward into ſuch kinds, and degrees of guilt, as may drive them deſperate, and extinguiſh all thoughts of reconciliation unto God. But this wiſdom will ſhortly appear the moſt wretched, and contemptible folly, which perverts the noble powers of an angel, to increaſe and propagate guilt, condemnation, and eternal miſery.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 3. *The man, whom,* &c.] The conſtruction of this verſe is very difficult; but the obvious meaning is, that by immediately aſſaulting David, before he was prepared for the attack, he might eaſily be ſmitten alone; and that this would effectually anſwer Abſalom's purpoſe, and bring over the people to a quiet ſubmiſſion to his authority. The deſperate wickedneſs of the propoſal excited no oppoſition, either from Abſalom, or from the people; but they were blinded from ſeeing, that it was the moſt politic meaſure, which could have been adopted in ſuch circumſtances.

V. 7—13.] Huſhai's great aim was to gain time for David to remove to a greater diſtance, and to increaſe, and encourage his army: and if he had only put Abſalom off from executing Ahithophel's counſel for one night, it might have proved of eſſential ſervice, eſpecially as he would have been able to give him intelligence of his danger. In purſuing this object, he oppoſed Ahithophel's propoſal with conſummate addreſs, and with ſome ſpecious arguments: From David's character for valour, and military ſkill; from the courage, and indignation of his fol-

9 Behold,

9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom;

10 And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.

11 Therefore I counsel, that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude, and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him, and of all the men that *are* with him, there shall not be left so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel: for the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel, (for they might not be seen to come into the city,) and a wench went and told them: and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court, whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought, and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 And it came to pass after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water; for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

22 Then David arose, and all the people

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lowers; and from the probability that David would, by some stratagem of war, surprise, and overcome his assailants, if they were not very numerous, and so discourage the whole party; he argued that Ahithophel's counsel was not good at that time. But the measures, which he proposed in lieu of it, were addressed to the vain glory, the ambition, and perhaps the revenge of Absalom, and of his followers. To raise a vast army, which being the universal favourite, he might easily accomplish; to command it himself, that the honour might be all his own; to carry matters with a high hand, and to make sure work, and to destroy David, and all his party: this was a more pompous scheme, and more suited to a man of Absalom's capacity and disposition, than the sagacious counsel of Ahithophel: and it pleased God so to infatuate him and all his party, that it met with general approbation. Ahithophel's former counsel was followed; for God intended to correct David: but his latter was not; for he meant not to destroy *him*, but Absalom. Thus God answered David's prayer, and turned the good, that is the politic counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

V. 16. *Lodge not*, &c.] Hushai feared lest Absalom should change his mind; and he was satisfied that he was determined to murder David, if possible, and without delay; and therefore he sent him intelligence to provide immediately for his safety.

V. 17. *Now Jonathan*, &c.] It seems that these young men were suspected by Absalom's party, though they were restrained from injuring Zadok, and Abiathar: and therefore they did not enter the city, but abode at a distance; whither their intelligence was sent to them by a young woman, as an unsuspected messenger: which with great danger they were enabled to deliver.

V. 22. *There lacked*, &c.] This was a remarkable instance of God's providential care over his servant, and his friends; and he was therein a type of Christ, who

that *were* with him, and they paſſed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

23 And when Ahithophel ſaw that his counſel was not followed, he ſaddled *his* aſs, and aroſe, and gat him home to his houſe, to his city, and put his houſhold in order, and hanged himſelf, and died, and was buried in the ſepulchre of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim: and Abſalom paſſed over Jordan, he and all the men of Iſrael with him.

25 And Abſalom made Amaſa captain of the hoſt inſtead of Joab: which Amaſa *was* a man's ſon whoſe name *was* Ithra, an Iſraelite, that went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahaſh, ſiſter to Zeruiah, Joab's mother.

26 So Iſrael and Abſalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 And it came to paſs, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the ſon of Nahaſh of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the ſon of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and baſons, and earthen veſſels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulſe*,

29 And honey, and butter, and ſheep, and cheeſe of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they ſaid, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirſty, in the wilderneſs.

CHAP. XVIII.

Cantains, 1ſt. David's army ſent forth to battle, with orders to ſpare Abſalom, v. 1—5. 2d. Abſalom's army routed. His flight, ſuſpenſion on a tree, and death, v. 6—18. 3d. Tidings carried to David, with his bitter lamentation, v. 19—33.

loſes none of his true followers. About this time David penned the third pſalm.

V. 23. *And when*, &c.] This crafty politician had ſeen enough of Abſalom to conſider his cauſe already loſt: his vexation, when he ſaw ſo wild a ſcheme preferred to his ſound policy, was intolerable; he expected nothing but extreme diſgrace, and a public execution for his treaſon; but it is doubtful whether he deſpaired of God's mercy, or was hardened in preſumption and infidelity: however he moſt deliberately murdered himſelf. It is obſervable that three, at leaſt, out of the four inſtances of ſelf-murder, recorded in ſcripture, were apoſtate profeſſors of godlineſs, viz. Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas. Now David's prayer was anſwered more terribly than he expected or deſired.

V. 27.] Perhaps this Shobi, the ſon of Nahaſh, had been advanced to the kingdom by David, inſtead of Hanun his brother; and thus expreſſed his gratitude: or perhaps he was proſelyted, and lived amongſt the Iſraelites. The proviſions, which were brought to David, not only expreſſed the liberality of his friends, but the extreme diſtreſs, to which his followers were reduced.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When ſatan hath ſeduced men into a wicked courſe of life, every crime makes more, and greater enormities almoſt neceſſary, and they muſt go forward, or loſe the fruit, and ſuffer the puniſhment of their former villanies. His ſervants are more ſagacious, and vigorous in their miſchievous devices, than the ſervants of God are in doing good: and they have a vaſt *apparent* advantage, being freed from the reſtraints of conſcience, gratitude, natural affection, and the fear of God. That ſome few individuals ſhould be monſters of iniquity would not excite much ſurpriſe: but from age to age vaſt multitudes are found, who with one conſent break through every tie of duty to God or man; eſpecially when engaged in oppoſing the cauſe of true religion, and its cordial friends: and this demonſtrates, that man by nature is an enemy to the ſervice and holineſs of God.—When the heart is hardened in iniquity, it is righteous for God to infatuate the underſtanding: and when the rage of his enemies hath accompliſhed his ſecret purpoſes, and they are about to proceed, their machinations prove unſucceſsful, and forward their own deſtruction. The Lord can perform the greateſt deliverances by the feebleſt inſtruments: he can protect his ſervants in their extremeſt dangers; or provide for them in their moſt preſſing neceſſities: he can reſtrain the malice of their moſt cruel enemies, and enlarge the heart of unexpected friends: and whatever wiſdom, addreſs, diſpatch, or aſſiſtance, any man employs or affords, the ſucceſs is from God alone, who will not ſuffer one of his people to periſh. When ſatan hath tempted to ſucceſſive crimes, till men are ripe for deſtruction; and when God's providence hath diſappointed their ambitious and vain-glorious projects, and their lives are rendered miſerable; the laſt device of that ſubtle enemy is to urge them to murder themſelves: and in this way he ſometimes deludes thoſe, who have been moſt renowned for their wiſdom, but who are at length ſo fooliſh as to plunge themſelves into everlaſting miſery, for fear of temporal diſgrace and ſuffering. Let us then beware of hypocriſy and apoſtacy, which frequently have this event: let us fear ſinning againſt knowledge and conſcience, which is often the forerunner of judicial hardneſs: let us ſeek the wiſdom which comes from, and leads to God, and heaven: let us watch againſt the riſing emotions of pride, malice, envy, or ambition: let us learn to pity, and relieve thoſe who are in diſtreſs, with liberality proportioned to our ability. Our King indeed needs not our help: but he hath aſſured us, that what we do for the leaſt of his brethren, who are ſick, poor, or deſtitute, ſhall be accepted and recompenſed, as if it were done to himſelf.

AND David numbered the people that *were* with him, and ſet captains of thouſands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David ſent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king ſaid unto the people, I will ſurely go forth with you myſelf alſo.

3 But the people anſwered, Thou ſhalt not go forth: for, if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thouſand of us; therefore now *it is* better that thou ſuccour us out of the city.

4 And the king ſaid unto them, What ſeemeth you beſt I will do. And the king ſtood by the gate ſide, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thouſands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abiſhai and Ittai, ſaying, *Deal* gently for my ſake with the young man, *even* with Abſalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Abſalom.

6 So the people went out into the field againſt Iſrael: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Iſrael were ſlain before the ſervants of David; and there was there a great ſlaughter that day of twenty thouſand *men*.

8 For the battle was there ſcattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the ſword devoured.

9 And Abſalom met the ſervants of David. And Abſalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man ſaw *it*, and told Joab, and ſaid, Behold, I ſaw Abſalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab ſaid unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou ſaweſt *him*; and why didſt thou not ſmite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten *ſhekels* of ſilver, and a girdle?

12 And the man ſaid unto Joab, Though I ſhould receive a thouſand *ſhekels* of ſilver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand againſt the king's ſon: for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abiſhai, and Ittai, ſaying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Abſalom.

13 Otherwiſe I ſhould have wrought falſehood againſt mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyſelf wouldeſt have ſet thyſelf againſt *me*.

NOTES.

V. 3. *Worth ten thouſand*, &c.] This was ſpoken, not only out of affection to David; but from a proper eſtimate of the importance of his life to the civil and religious intereſts of the whole nation; which was like to ſink into the moſt abject miſery, and the greateſt ungodlineſs, if Abſalom was ſucceſsful in his wicked uſurpation. As Ahithophel had foreſeen, Abſalom's delay afforded David's friends an opportunity of ſtrengthening his army, which was now become capable of meeting their opponents in the field of battle.

V. 5. *Deal gently*, &c.] Abſalom aimed only at the life of his indulgent father; David deſired nothing ſo much as the preſervation of his rebellious ſon. But Abſalom's crimes were too enormous to have been pardoned, conſiſtent with David's duty; and the peace of Iſrael could not be eſtabliſhed whilſt he lived. Perhaps he only hoped, that if he were not ſlain in battle, he would live to repent of his wickedneſs, and ſo eſcape the future vengeance of God. But if he had been ſpared, he would probably have occaſioned David further trouble, and ſin; and it pleaſed God to preſerve his ſervant from the guilt of pardoning, and from the anguiſh of puniſhing him. David ſeems not to have doubted of the victory, after his prayer againſt Ahithophel had been ſo remarkably anſwered. The wood of Ephraim was beyond Jordan, and, as is ſuppoſed, the place where the Ephraimites had been ſlain in the days of Jephthah. (*Jud.* c. xii. v. 4—6.)

V. 9. *His head*, &c.] Either his hair, which he had effeminately tended, was ſo entangled in the boughs of the oak, that he could not extricate himſelf; or his head was confined betwixt two arms of the tree, through the rapidity and inattention, with which he rode. In this dreadful ſituation he remained a conſiderable time, doubtleſs with unſpeakable horror, expecting his doom, without being able in the leaſt to help himſelf. His fate was as extraordinary as his crimes; and by being *providentially* hanged on a tree, he was, as it were, pronounced accurſed of God himſelf.

V. 13. *Wrought falſhood*, &c.] He meant, that he

BRITISH
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MUSEUM

Engravd for the Revd. Mr. Scotts Family Bible.

II. SAMUEL. CH. XVIII. V. XIV

E. F. Burney del. *Reynolds sculp.*

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14 Then ſaid Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thruſt them through the heart of Abſalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midſt of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compaſſed about, and ſmote Abſalom, and ſlew him.

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from purſuing after Iſrael: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Abſalom, and caſt him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of ſtones upon him: and all Iſrael fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Abſalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himſelf a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he ſaid, I have no ſon to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day Abſalom's place.

19 Then ſaid Ahimaaz the ſon of Zadok, Let me now run and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt not bear tidings this day, but thou ſhalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou ſhalt bear no tidings, becauſe the king's ſon is dead.

21 Then ſaid Joab to Cuſhi, Go tell the king what thou haſt ſeen. And Cuſhi bowed himſelf unto Joab, and ran.

22 Then ſaid Ahimaaz the ſon of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howſoever, let me, I pray thee, alſo run after Cuſhi. And Joab ſaid, Wherefore wilt thou run, my ſon, ſeeing that thou haſt no tidings ready?

23 But howſoever, *ſaid he*, let me run. And he ſaid unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and over-ran Cuſhi.

24 And David ſat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king ſaid, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman ſaw another man running, and the watchman called unto the porter, and ſaid, Behold, *another* man running alone. And the king ſaid, He alſo bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman ſaid, Me thinketh the running of the foremoſt is like the running of Ahimaaz the ſon of Zadok. And the king ſaid, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and ſaid unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men, that lifted up their hand againſt my lord the king.

29 And the king ſaid, is the young man Abſalom ſafe? And Ahimaaz anſwered, When Joab ſent the king's ſervant, and *me* thy ſervant,

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ſhould have cheated himſelf; and by ſeeking a reward, have forfeited his life. This man's anſwer was replete with truth, good ſenſe, and ſound argument: and Joab was conſcious that it did not admit of an anſwer.

V. 14. *Thruſt them through*, &c.] Joab doubtleſs intended the intereſt of both David and his kingdom in diſpatching Abſalom; and his death was of ſalutary tendency, and even neceſſary: yet he cannot be excuſed in acting againſt the expreſs deſire and command of his Sovereign; for he had no warrant from God or man to execute deſerved vengeance upon him; and having deſerved death himſelf, he was the laſt perſon, who ſhould have complained of the obſtruction of public juſtice. But he was a man of an overbearing ſpirit, who preſumed ſo much upon his ſervices and conſequence to David, that he domineered over him continually.

V. 17, 18.] It ſeems that Abſalom's ſons died young, (as a juſt judgment upon him for ſeeking the life of his father,) and that, after their death, he erected ſome magnificent building, within, or near to which, he meant to be interred; and by which he hoped to perpetuate his memory with honour to future generations. But, on the contrary, he was buried with ignominy as a criminal; (See *Deut.* c. xxi. v. 20—23;) and his pillar proved a monument of his folly and wicked ambition.

V. 22. *No tidings ready.*] That is, no convenient tidings. Joab was ſenſible that David would bitterly lament the death of Abſalom; and was not willing to ſend ſo reſpectable a perſon as Ahimaaz with unwelcome tidings; but appointed for that ſervice an inferior perſon, whoſe name ſeems to intimate that he was an Ethiopian, and perhaps a ſlave: however, he was cordially attached to the intereſts of David.

V. 29. *I ſaw a great tumult*, &c.] Perhaps one motive

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vant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

30 And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cushi, is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

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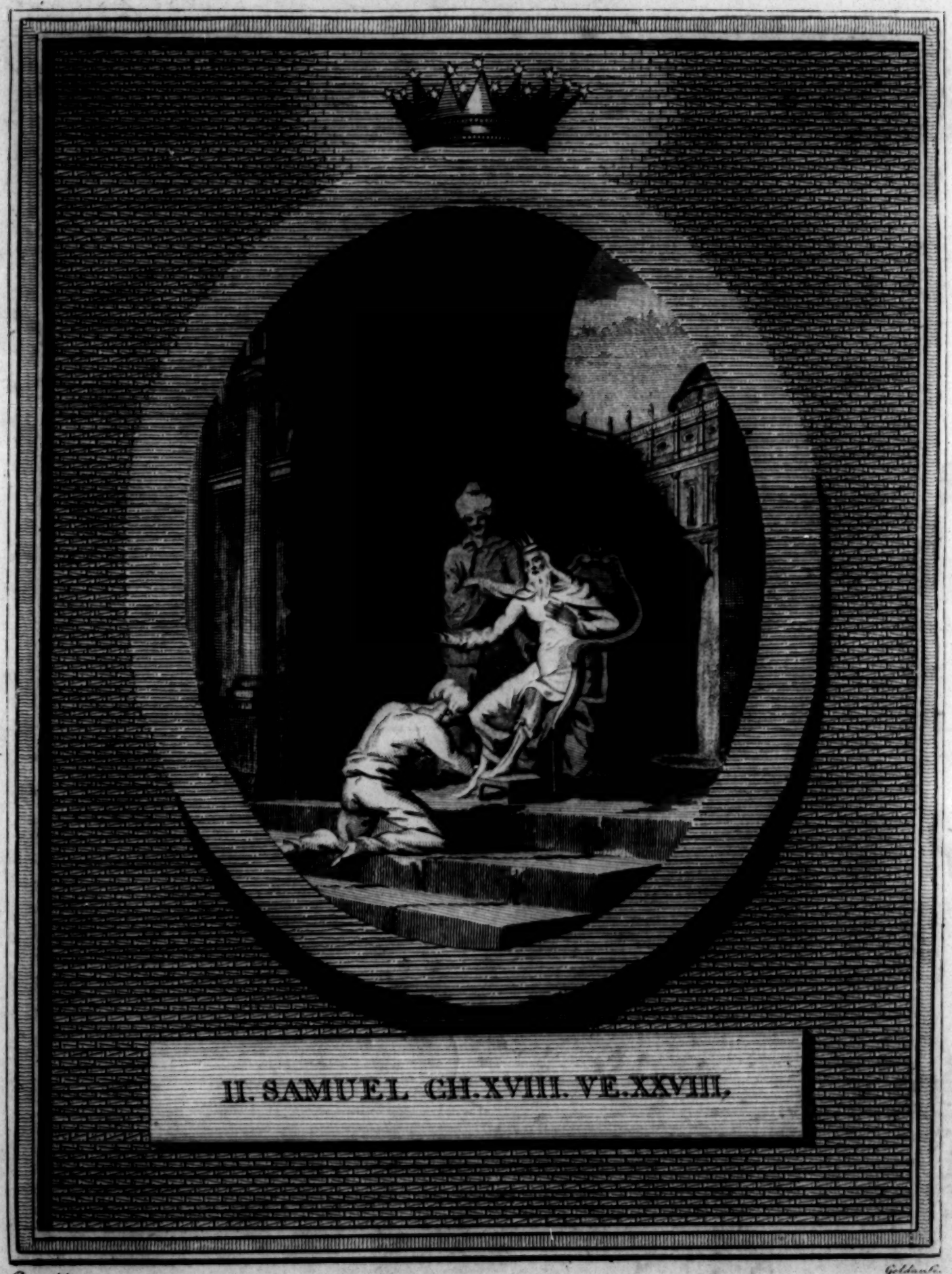
that induced Ahimaaz to desire to carry David the first news of the victory, was, that he might gradually prepare his mind for the intelligence of Absalom's death: for though he rejoiced in his deliverance, he sympathized with him in his grief; and for this purpose he evaded the king's question; which Cushi soon after indirectly, but more plainly replied to. The piety of the language of Ahimaaz and Cushi on this occasion are worthy notice and imitation.

V. 33.] David's grief was doubtless extravagant, and very faulty. He ought to have been thankful for his own deliverance and that of Israel, and to have submitted with silent patience to the righteous judgment of God upon his son. But he was a man of very warm passions: he had inordinately loved a very unworthy object, who was cut off in the midst of his crimes: he could not but think of the state of his immortal soul: he was conscious that, when his own forfeited life was spared, after his adultery and murder, this burden had been laid upon his family; and he considered himself, by his transgression, example, and the chastisement of God, as accessory to the dire catastrophe; and in the vehemency of his grief he wished, that he had died himself rather than his son, as being better prepared for the eternal world: whilst the agitation of his mind prevented him from adverting to the fatal effects of such an event to his kingdom, and to that cause, which, in his calmer hours, was nearest to his heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The peculiar exercises of religion ought to precede, but not to exclude the use of every prudent means of securing success in lawful undertakings: and they who would engage others in arduous and perilous attempts, must be willing to take a full share in the hardship and danger. But in some cases the life of an individual is of such importance to the public welfare, that thousands are authorised to demand it of him, as a duty, to take the utmost care of himself. It is well when such affection and fidelity subsists betwixt princes and their subjects: and when they are mutually willing to venture, or to suffer for each other's benefit. Thus Jesus loved his people, and laid down his life for them: thus they consider his cause as dearer to them than every personal interest, and are prepared to lay down their lives for his sake. True courage and firmness of mind are very different from rashness and obstinacy; and wise men are always most ready to listen to prudent counsel, even from their inferiors. The extremes of our most amiable propensities are often of fatal consequence: and it is merciful for God to deny us those things, which we greatly desire, when he sees they would prove our temptation or affliction. Multitudes suffer *through* the wickedness of one; but *for* their own crimes: and rebellion against good and lawful governors is generally, and justly punished with the ruin of those concerned in it. Yet the seducers into the ways of sin must be answerable to God for the consequences; and who can number the murders, for which many ambitious usurpers will stand indicted before his righteous tribunal! At all times "evil pursueth sinners." And when in the appointed hour it overtaketh them, they cannot possibly escape; but those things on which they have most depended, and of which they have been most proud, often prove the occasion, or instruments of their destruction. Let young people look upon Absalom suspended upon the tree, accursed and forsaken of Heaven and earth; and there let them read the Lord's abhorrence of rebellion against parents: let them consider the agony of his death, and the ignominy of his burial; and learn how empty all external embellishments are; how vain the flattery of man; and all that care, which is employed in rendering themselves admired and renowned. After all, the memory "of the wicked shall rot;" and nothing can preserve us from misery and contempt, but heavenly wisdom and the grace of God. They, who are greedy of gain, often work falshood against their own lives or souls; and many persons will rejoice in the effects of wickedness, who will be the first to inform against those; who have committed it, in order to exculpate themselves: but our safety lies in obeying the Lord, and the lawful commands of our rulers. The removal of one ringleader in daring crimes proves a public benefit, and makes way for the exercise of clemency to numbers: but that will not authorise every individual to take away the life of the most notorious offender: for it is not enough that the thing ought to be done; but we are to consider whether it be a service allotted to us by our great Master. Every deliverance should be received with praise and thanksgiving to God: and good men delight in bearing glad tidings to those, whom they love. May all, who proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to sinners, be men of such unblemished reputation! and may numbers more be sent forth with this joyful message!—All other good tidings have so much alloy in them, that our joy on account of them must be mingled with weeping, or with trembling: and alas! we are more disposed to complain of the trouble, which alloys our mercies, than to be thankful for the mercies themselves. But whilst we learn from the example before us, to watch and pray against partial and excessive attachments; and against the indulgence or neglect of our children; and the unadvised language and passionate wishes of indulged grief: whilst we learn to bow down to the



II. SAMUEL. CH. XVIII. VE. XXVIII.

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CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1*st. David's grief reſtrained by Joab's remonſtrance, v.* 1—8. 2*d. The men of Iſrael heſitating about bringing David back, whilſt the men of Judah, encited by Zadok, &c, firſt invite his return, v.* 9—15. 3*d. Shimei meeting David, and obtaining a pardon, v.* 16—23. 4*th. Mephiboſheth proving himſelf ſlandered, and the grant made to Ziba, in part revoked, v.* 24—30. 5*th. The converſation betwixt David and Barzillai, v.* 31—40. 6*th. A ſharp diſpute betwixt the men of Judah, and the men of Iſrael, v.* 41—43.

AND it was told Joab, Behold the king weepeth and mourneth for Abſalom.

2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard ſay that day, how the king was grieved for his ſon.

3 And the people gat them by ſtealth that day into the city, as people being aſhamed ſteal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my ſon, Abſalom! O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon!

5 And Joab came into the houſe to the king, and ſaid, Thou haſt ſhamed this day the faces of all thy ſervants, which this day have ſaved thy life, and the lives of thy ſons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou loveſt thine enemies, and hateſt thy friends: for thou haſt declared this day, that thou regardeſt neither princes nor ſervants: for this day I perceive, that if Abſalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleaſed thee well.

7 Now therefore ariſe, go forth, and ſpeak comfortably unto thy ſervants: for I ſwear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worſe unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king aroſe, and ſat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, ſaying, Behold the king doth ſit in the gate. And all the people came before the king; for Iſrael had fled every man to his tent.

9 And all the people were at ſtrife throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, ſaying, The king ſaved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philiſtines, and now he is fled out of the land for Abſalom.

10 And Abſalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle: now therefore why ſpeak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And king David ſent to Zadok and to Abiathar the prieſts, ſaying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, ſaying, Why are ye the laſt

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righteous appointments of God in our ſharpeſt trials; to adore his unmerited mercy in our comfort sand deliverances; and to prefer the public welfare to any perſonal, or private affections: may we not in David perceive a ſhadow of the Saviour's love, who wept over, prayed for, and ſuffered death in all its bitterneſs, for us vile rebels and enemies, without even excepting thoſe, who perſecuted and crucified him; and from him may we learn "not to be overcome "of evil, but to overcome evil with good."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—8.] David's conduct was very impolitic, and tended to weaken the attachment, and damp the zeal of his adherents; who would interpret his exceſſive grief into an indifference about their intereſts, and diſſatisfaction with their ſervices: and inſtead of exultation and joy, and the commendations of their prince, they were ſent away grieved, and aſhamed. Joab had therefore good reaſon to interpoſe, and would have been juſtifiable in a very plain remonſtrance with David, upon the impropriety of his conduct: but the aſperity, the reproaches, and implied threat of a general defection, that he employed, are to be aſcribed to his pride, and inſolence, who gloried in diſobeying, and being rude to his prince. However David, being conſcious that Joab had truth, and reaſon on his ſide, ſmothered his reſentment, and very prudently obviated the diſguſt of the people.

V. 9—15.] David would not appear to reign by force of arms; and therefore he waited, till he was publicly invited to reſume the reins of government. From the time, that he began to reign in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only, the diſtinction betwixt Judah and Iſrael began to be more obſerved. The men of Iſrael were firſt diſpoſed to return to their allegiance, and they ſpake honourably of David's former ſervices: but either fear, or ſhame, or ſome ſuch hindrance, retarded them from publicly inviting his return to Jeruſalem. The report of this having reached the king, he probably thought it would be diſhonourable to his own tribe, if they were the laſt in this ſervice; or perhaps they were ſo deeply involved in Abſalom's rebellion, that they feared his reſentment, if he were reinſtated in his authority: and therefore he employed Zadok, and Abiathar, to aſſure them of his affection, and to excite them to appear in this buſineſs: by which means

to bring the king back to his houſe? ſeeing the ſpeech of all Iſrael is come to the king, *even* to his houſe.

12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my fleſh; wherefore then are ye the laſt to bring back the king?

13 And ſay ye to Amaſa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my fleſh? God do ſo to me, and more alſo, if thou be not captain of the hoſt before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of* one man; ſo that they ſent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy ſervants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

16 And Shimei the ſon of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, haſted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And *there were* a thouſand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the ſervant of the houſe of Saul, and his fifteen ſons and his twenty ſervants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's houſhold, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the ſon of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And ſaid unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy ſervant did perverſely the day that my lord the king went out of Jeruſalem, that the king ſhould take it to his heart.

20 For thy ſervant doth know that I have ſinned; therefore, behold, I am come the firſt this day of all the houſe of Joſeph, to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah anſwered and ſaid, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, becauſe he curſed the LORD's anointed?

22 And David ſaid, What have I to do with you, ye ſons of Zeruiah, that ye ſhould this day be adverſaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Iſrael? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Iſrael.

23 Therefore the king ſaid unto Shimei, Thou ſhalt not die: and the king ſware unto him.

24 And Mephiboſheth the ſon of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dreſſed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor waſhed his clothes from the day the king departed, until the day he came *again* in peace.

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they took the lead in ſuch manner, as led the men of Iſrael to conclude, that they meant to engroſs the credit of recalling David, and excluſively to ſecure his favour. It would have been much better, if they had conſulted with their brethren, and acted in concert in this matter, which would have precluded many bad conſequences. David alſo was very uneaſy under Joab's haughtineſs, and was diſpleaſed with him for ſlaying Abſalom, and for his conſequent rudeneſs: and he wiſhed to lay him aſide. And he ſuppoſed, that if Amaſa were aſſured of pardon, and preferment, he would draw over all his party into his intereſts. But he was not a proper perſon to ſupplant Joab, having headed ſo daring a rebellion: and Joab's influence with the army, and with David's beſt friends, was too great to be thus ſhaken; and he was ſure not to ſubmit quietly to ſuch a diſgrace. David therefore did not act with prudence upon this emergency.

V. 20—23. *The houſe of Joſeph*, &c.] That is, of Iſrael, (in contradiction from Judah,) of which Ephraim the ſon of Joſeph was accounted the chief: for Shimei was of the tribe of Benjamin. Shimei appeared penitent, and David granted him a pardon, and ſware to him, that he ſhould not die at that time, by his authority, and for that crime. Abiſhai would have had him made an example of, as indeed he well deſerved to be: but David intimated, that he, and Joab were always inſtigating him to acts of ſeverity, and to act improperly: and it would be injurious to his interſts, as well as contrary to his inclinations, to ſully his reſtoration, with the execution of a ſingle criminal: and there was no occaſion; for all were diſpoſed peaceably to ſubmit unto him.

V. 24—30.] Mephiboſheth probably did not come to David, until his return to Jeruſalem: from the time of the king's departure, he had utterly neglected the care of his perſon, and ſhewn every token of exceſſive ſorrow. To the enquiry, wherefore he had not accompanied him? he anſwered by a ſimple narration of facts, united with the moſt reſpectful, affectionate, thankful, and ſubmiſſive language. He owed all he poſſeſſed to David's clemency, and bounty; he complained not of the grant that had been made to Ziba; and he was confident that the king would do nothing, but what was conſiſtent with wiſdom, and

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W. Whitley del. *W. & S. Whitley sc.*

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25 And it came to paſs, when he was come to Jeruſalem to meet the king, that the king ſaid unto him, Wherefore wenteſt not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he anſwered, My lord, O king, my ſervant deceived me: for thy ſervant ſaid, I will ſaddle me an aſs, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; becauſe thy ſervant *is* lame.

27 And he hath ſlandered thy ſervant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.

28 For all *of* my father's houſe were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didſt thou ſet thy ſervant among them that did eat at thine own table: what right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou any more of thy matters? I have ſaid, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth ſaid unto the king, Yea, let him take all, foraſmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own houſe.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourſcore years old: and he had provided the king of ſuſtenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

33 And the king ſaid unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jeruſalem.

34 And Barzillai ſaid unto the king, How long have I to live, that I ſhould go up with the king unto Jeruſalem?

35 I *am* this day fourſcore years old: *and* can I diſcern between good and evil? can thy ſervant taſte what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of ſinging men and ſinging women? wherefore then ſhould thy ſervant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy ſervant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why ſhould the king recompenſe it me with ſuch a reward?

37 Let thy ſervant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But, behold, thy ſervant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what ſhall ſeem good unto thee.

38 And the king anſwered, Chimham ſhall go over with me, and I will do to him that which ſhall ſeem good unto thee: and whatſoever thou ſhalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kiſſed Barzillai, and bleſſed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and alſo half the people of Iſrael.

41 And, behold, all the men of Iſrael came to the king, and ſaid unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah ſtolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his houſhold, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah anſwered the men of Iſrael, Becauſe the king *is* near of kin to us? wherefore then be ye angry for this matter?

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juſtice. But whether David did not fully credit him, or whether he was aſhamed of his credulity, and wiſhed not to have it further noticed, he ſuffered Ziba to eſcape merited puniſhment, and to enjoy part of the fruits of his ſlander: or at leaſt contented himſelf with reſtoring matters to their former ſettlement. But Mephibosheth ſo rejoiced in David's ſafety, and ſucceſs, that he treated the whole affair concerning his own eſtate, as a matter of indifference.

V. 40—43.] By ſuch time as David had paſſed over Jordan, part of the elders of Iſrael came to bring him back, and were diſguſted at finding that they came too late, and that the buſineſs was ſettled without conſulting them. This might have been expected from the natural ambition, and jealouſy of the human heart: for they thought themſelves deſpiſed, and that the men of Judah took too much upon them: whilſt their plea of relationſhip to David tended only to increaſe their ſuſpicions, and envy; and the *fiercer* words, which the men of Judah returned to their angry remonſtrance, produced very bad effects. Whatever value, or reſpect they at this time profeſſed for their king; they would not have quarrelled ſo furiouſly about their own credit and intereſt in recalling him, if they had been truly ſorry for their former rebellion. David freely forgave them all their groſs injuries againſt him; but they could not endure the leaſt affront from each other.

matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *coſt?* or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Iſrael anſwered the men of Judah, and ſaid, We have ten parts in the king, and we have alſo more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye deſpiſe us, that our advice ſhould not be firſt had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Iſrael.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Exceſſive indulgence of any paſſion not only offends God, but betrays men into great imprudences in their temporal concerns. They, who have faithfully ſerved our intereſts, expect that we ſhould appear pleaſed with them, and thankful for their ſervices. And many will do more for a ſmile, and a kind word from their ſuperiors, than for a more ſubſtantial recompenſe: and will be much grieved, and diſheartened, if they think themſelves frowned upon: and it is great imprudence to diſpleaſe ſuch adherents. Upon important emergencies plain truths may properly be ſpoken to the greateſt, and beſt of men; and they may be cloſely reaſoned and expoſtulated with: but indecent roughneſs, and an aſſuming demeanour in an inferior will render the moſt prudent, ſeaſonable, and honeſt counſel unacceptable; and perhaps ineffectual. However a wiſe man will endeavour to diſregard the impropriety, and benefit by the ſound reaſon of well-intended remonſtrances: and timely conceſſions will commonly prevent the ill effects of miſtaken meaſures. Men are often betrayed, by their diſcontents, and fickleneſs, into ſuch actions, as their ſober judgment diſapproves, and of which experience will conſtrain them to be weary: but they do not ſo readily condemn themſelves for the moſt evident treachery or ingratitude. Many allow that ſuch and ſuch things ſhould be done, and wonder that others do not ſet about them: and yet they are equally tardy, through their own indolence, pride, or covetouſneſs. Miniſters ſhould at all times be examples of fidelity to magiſtrates, and rulers: and may very properly exhort others to do their plain, and evident duty in that, as well as in other reſpects. Otherwiſe it is beſt for them to intermeddle very little in public tranſactions. Convincing arguments, urged in mildneſs, and love, are very forcible, and produce great effects upon the minds of men in all temporal concerns. But only the grace of God can bow our hearts into ſubmiſſion to his humbling truth, and holy will. In acts of clemency to thoſe, who have been open offenders, care ſhould be taken not to diſguſt ſuch, as have deſerved better of us; though in ſome reſpects they have failed of their duty: and whatever expoſes a man to envy, or rivalſhip, however ſplendid, and valuable, will probably prove injurious to him. Self-preference, and contempt of others ſhould always be guarded againſt; and every thing ſhould be avoided, which can bear ſuch a conſtruction: equality, mutual reſpect, and harmony ſhould be ſtudied, and many intereſts and punctilios receded from, that ſtrife, and contention may be excluded. Many ſeem to be ſorry for thoſe crimes, which expoſe them to preſent puniſhment; and the language, and ſemblance of repentance are eaſily imitated: but it is ſafeſt for us to judge favourably of others, and if we do err, to err on the ſide of candour, and clemency; and to leave it to the heart-ſearching God, to determine between the upright, and the hypocritical. Peculiar mercies from God ſhould diſpoſe us to be the more merciful to others: and our beſt friends muſt be conſidered as adverſaries, when they would perſuade us to act contrary to our conſcience, and our duty. Perſeverance in well doing will at length refute ſlanderous accuſations: true affection for our friends, and ſympathy with them in their afflictions, will create an indifferency to the pleaſures of ſenſe, and external decorations: and when they are beloved for the Lord's ſake, as well as for perſonal obligations; the effect will be much greater, and continued. But this ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy, on account of their preſent, or in the proſpect of their future proſperity, and our own in fellowſhip with them; which ſhould ſtill more increaſe our weanedneſs from the trifling intereſts of this world. Credulity in believing ſlanders often leads godly people into difficulties, and covers them with ſhame: yet no offenders are ſo ſeldom treated with proper ſeverity, as back-biters. When God gives largeneſs of heart, as well as great wealth, he qualifies a man to be a public bleſſing: and doing good liberally is the proper pleaſure, and advantage of wealth. For the little pleaſure of outward enjoyments quickly grows inſipid: old age deſtroys the reliſh for them: death muſt ſoon ſeparate a man from his riches, and then he muſt give an account to God of his ſtewardſhip. It becomes us therefore, as we advance in life, to relinquiſh worldly purſuits, before we be torn from them; and leaving to our juniors thoſe ſcenes of buſineſs, or of pleaſure, where reflection is too often diſſipated, and the voice of conſcience ſtunned, to prefer retirement, and privacy, where we may beſt prepare for the cloſing hour. Even the cities, where the truths of God are moſt profeſſed, and his ordinances are beſt adminiſtered; and thoſe courts, where the prince encourages, and ſets an example of true piety, are enſnaring places, through the multitudes of another character, which frequent them. And though allowances are to be made to youth, in matters inexpedient to old age; yet the ſooner, and the more entirely young people devote themſelves to God, the ſafer, and happier they will be. However it is our duty to recompenſe to the children, the kindneſs ſhewn us by their parents, and to pray for them, that they may have grace properly to uſe their temporal good things. Envy, and anger often interrupt the moſt promiſing appearances; and in moſt quarrels both parties are culpable. A ſuppoſed neglect excites diſpleaſure; an angry expreſſion provokes a retort: words grow warmer, and fiercer: and thus the beſt deſigns are diſconcerted, and much evil is committed: which might be otherwiſe, if men would watch againſt their own pride, and be careful not to affront that of others; and would remember, that a ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath. But here again, methinks, ſome glimpſes may be diſcerned of the glorious character, and kingdom of David's ſon, and David's Lord. Though anointed of the Father, to be his King upon his holy hill of Zion, he reigns over a willing people, who deem it their privilege to be his ſubjects. Once indeed they were rebels,

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1ſt. The rebellion of Sheba, &c. v. 1, 2. 2d. The ſecluſion of David's defiled concubines, v. 3. 3d. Amaſa ſent to raiſe forces; Abiſhai leading forth the Cherethites, &c; Amaſa meeting him, and murdered by Joab, who reſumed the command, and purſued Sheba, v. 4—10. 4th. Sheba ſhut up in Abel Beth-maachah, and ſlain by the citizens, through the interpoſition of a wiſe woman: the end of the rebellion; and the names of David's chief officers, v. 11—26.

AND there happened to be there a man of Belial, whoſe name *was* Sheba, the ſon of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and ſaid, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the ſon of Jeſſe: every man to his tents, O Iſrael.

2 So every man of Iſrael went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the ſon of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jeruſalem.

3 And David came to his houſe at Jeruſalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the houſe, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were ſhut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then ſaid the king to Amaſa, Aſſemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here preſent.

5 So Amaſa went to aſſemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the ſet time which he had appointed him.

6 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, Now ſhall Sheba the ſon of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Abſalom: take thou thy lord's ſervants and purſue after him, leſt he get him fenced cities and eſcape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jeruſalem to purſue after Sheba the ſon of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great ſtone which *is* in Gibeon, Amaſa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a

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and numbers periſh in that rebellion: but when they became ſenſible of their danger, they were fearful, or reluctant to ſubmit unto him, till his miniſters, by repreſenting his tender love, and brotherly relation to them, and by his promiſes of pardon, and preferment, through the concurring influences of his Spirit, bowed their hearts to an humble willingneſs that he ſhould reign over them: then he readily pardoned, and accepted them; and upon no accuſation will he caſt out, or cut off the worſt offender, who cries for his mercy. His friends ſincerely mourn when his cauſe is run down, and rejoice when it proſpers; however it fares with them, in reſpect of their worldly circumſtances. He will recompenſe thoſe, who from love to him feed his ſervants, with a place in his holy city, the new Jeruſalem; he will feaſt them upon the proviſions of his houſe; and will bleſs their children after them. Alas, that it muſt be added, that whilſt the king himſelf is ſo plenteous in mercy, many of his profeſſed ſubjects are envious of, and contentious with each other, upon the moſt unimportant concerns: which prevents much good, does immenſe miſchief, and occaſions lamentable ſcandals. May he at length teach all, who are called by his name, to follow the example of his humility, and meekneſs; and to rejoice in ſeeing the common cauſe promoted, let who will engroſs the credit of being the inſtrument: and may they all endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1, 2.] The diſputants vied with each other in loyal affection for their prince, but were really actuated by ambition of pre-eminence: one party confiding in nearneſs of relation to David, the other in their numbers. But at length the men of Iſrael, who had boaſted that they had *ten parts* in David, were ſo irritated, that they would have *no part* in him, but preferred a man of Belial before him. Thus are men hurried by their paſſions from one extreme to another.

V. 3.] The confinement and retired maintenance of theſe women was the only meaſure, that could be adopted, in juſtice, or prudence: unleſs they had been found deſerving of ſeverer puniſhment. The leſs they were ſeen or heard of, after what had paſt, the better; and perhaps their ſecluſion might be of real benefit to their ſouls.

V. 5.] *He tarried*, &c.] Amaſa's appointment to be commander of the army in the place of Joab, muſt needs be very unpopular with all thoſe, who had fought, and conquered under that commander: and as Amaſa had not been ſucceſsful for Abſalom, perhaps his own party did not greatly favour him. This might occaſion the unexpected delay in raiſing an army: but the men of Judah were more eager to diſpute about their king, than to engage in battle for him.

V. 6. *Thy lord's*, &c.] That is, Joab's ſoldiers; David would not employ Joab on this occaſion, becauſe he intended to remove him from his ſervice.

V. 8—10. *Amaſa went*, &c.] Amaſa arriving with the troops, which he had collected, took upon him the command of the army: and Joab ſeemed very chearfully to ſubmit; and followed the army as a private perſon; profeſſing zeal for the cauſe of David, whilſt he was medi-

girdle *with* a ſword faſtened upon his loins in the ſheath thereof: and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab ſaid to Amaſa, *Art* thou in health my brother? and Joab took Amaſa by the beard with the right hand to kiſs him.

10 But Amaſa took no heed to the ſword that was in Joab's hand: ſo he ſmote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and ſhed out his bowels to the ground, and ſtruck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abiſhai his brother purſued after Sheba the ſon of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men ſtood by him, and ſaid, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And Amaſa wallowed in blood in the midſt of the highway. And when the man ſaw that all the people ſtood ſtill he removed Amaſa out of the highway into the field, and caſt a cloth upon him, when he ſaw that every one that came by him ſtood ſtill.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to purſue after Sheba the ſon of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Iſrael unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went alſo after him.

15 And they came and beſieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they caſt up a bank againſt the city, and it ſtood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wiſe woman out of the city, Hear, hear; ſay, I pray you unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may ſpeak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman ſaid, *Art* thou Joab? and he anſwered, I *am he*. Then ſhe ſaid unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he anſwered, I do hear.

18 Then ſhe ſpake, ſaying, They were wont to ſpeak in old time, ſaying, They ſhall ſurely aſk *counſel* at Abel: and ſo they ended *the matter*.

19 I *am one of them that are* peaceable *and* faithful in Iſrael: thou ſeekeſt to deſtroy a city and a mother in Iſrael: why wilt thou ſwallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

20 And Joab anſwered and ſaid, Far be it,

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tating revenge, and murder. And he had ſo contrived, that his ſword fell from its ſcabbard, as if by chance, when he approached Amaſa, that without ſuſpicion he might have it drawn in his hand, when he ſaluted him: and thus pretending brotherly love, (for he was a near relation,) and in the very expreſſion of endeared friendſhip, he baſely murdered him, at one blow. Amaſa could not but know Joab's daring, and revengeful character, and the vexation, that he would feel, at being ſuperſeded by the commander of that rebellion, which he had cruſhed; and yet he did not ſuſpect, or attempt to avoid the fatal blow! But it was the Lord's righteous will, that he ſhould thus ſuffer the puniſhment due to his former treaſon. Joab confiding in the favour of the army, by this conduct, ſet both the king and public juſtice at defiance, and declared his reſolution to keep his place in contempt of all oppoſition. Having given Amaſa a mortal wound, he left him in the agonies of death, reſumed the command of the troops, and marched againſt the common enemy without concern, or delay.

V. 11—13. By the artifice of repreſenting the cauſe of Joab, as united with that of David, the people in general were left in ſuſpenſe, whether he acted by, or againſt the king's orders: and when Amaſa was removed, and covered, they followed their old commander without further heſitation.

V. 16—19.] The Iſraelites after they had had time for recollection, generally deſerted the cauſe of Sheba, having little inclination for another civil war: ſo that he was without bloodſhed, driven to take ſhelter in a fortified city in the tribe of Naphthali: againſt which Joab laid ſiege, ſuppoſing that the citizens were firmly attached to Sheba: and they prepared for reſiſtance, ſuppoſing he meant their deſtruction. But the effects of this miſunderſtanding were prevented, by the interpoſition of a prudent woman, who firſt expoſtulated with Joab, and then went to the citizens, and perſuaded them to the proper method of effecting an accommodation. Perhaps Abel of Beth-maachah had long been noted, as the reſidence of wiſe men, who had ſettled differences by prudent and equitable accommodation; ſo that it was become proverbial, "that "the way to terminate matters in litigation, was to aſk "counſel at Abel:" and therefore that city ought not raſhly to be deſtroyed. Or perhaps this wiſe woman referred to the law of God, which required that peace ſhould be proclaimed even to foreign cities, before ſiege was laid to them: which if Joab had obſerved, they would have ended the matter, by ſatisfying his demands. However ſhe pleaded that Abel had always been peaceable, and faithful, and a mother in Iſrael, a protector, and ſupport of the contiguous villages; and that in deſtroying it, he would do a public injury to the nation, by "ſwallowing up the "inheritance of the Lord."

V. 20—22. *Far be it*, &c.] Joab, though guilty of private revenge, was attentive to the public intereſt, and was very willing to ſettle the diſpute: if they would deliver far

far be it from me, that I ſhould ſwallow up or deſtroy.

21 The matter *is* not ſo: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the ſon of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand againſt the king, *even* againſt David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman ſaid unto Joab, Behold, his head ſhall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wiſdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the ſon of Bichri, and caſt *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jeruſalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab *was* over all the hoſt of Iſrael: and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites:

24 And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoſhaphat the ſon of Ahilud *was* recorder:

25 And Sheva *was* ſcribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the prieſts:

26 And Ira alſo the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

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up the traitor, he would not injure them: and thus his head purchaſed the ſafety of the city, and terminated the rebellion. And Joab without fear, or ſhame, as if he gloried in revenging himſelf, as well as in ſerving the public, returned to David, as though nothing had happened. When he murdered Abner, he might have been dealt with, but he was now grown too powerful to be diſplaced.

V. 24. *Adoram was*, &c.] After a ſeaſon the voluntary contributions of the people had been converted into a regular ſubſidy; and the tribute from the conquered kingdoms rendered this new office neceſſary. (Ch. viii. v. 16—18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt expect one trial after another for our ſalutary chaſtiſement, till we reach the place where ſin and ſorrow are for ever excluded. Angry diſputants commonly miſunderſtand, or miſconſtrue one another's words: and proud men will either manage every thing their own way, or they will have nothing to do with any thing. When we are greatly enraged, we are apt to avenge ourſelves upon the innocent, and thoſe, whom we profeſs to love, inſtead of thoſe, who have affronted us. The favour of the many is no more to be depended on, than that of the great: and what indeed have others a right to expect, when "Hoſanna to the Son of David" was ſo ſoon changed into "Crucify him, crucify him?" However all appearance of partiality betwixt thoſe, who are equally related to us, or have an equal claim upon us, ought to be avoided: for it often excites diſcord in families, churches, and kingdoms. Many a vehement quarrel would ſpend it's fury in angry words, and then die away; if ſome man of Belial were not preſent, to ſound the trumpet of public and laſting contention. Satan, if permitted, will be ſure to excite ſuch ringleaders of diſſention: and God, in wiſe and holy ſovereignty, is pleaſed often to permit them, that he may execute vengeance, or inflict correction, according to his righteous purpoſes: hence nations are viſited with war and bloodſhed, and the church with peſtilent diviſions, and *virulent controverſies*. When immoderate and inexpedient proviſion is made for ſenſual gratification, it will ſurely iſſue in grief and ſhame: and obſcure retirement beſt ſuits thoſe, who are become infamous by ſin. The moſt powerful men cannot effect all they wiſh, or all, that they ſee to be right; nay they cannot attempt it without danger: for at laſt they can only do, what *the many* can be prevailed with to concur in. Conſequences ſhould be well weighed before important meaſures are adopted; for reſentment, and diſguſt are dangerous counſellors. Our inbred luſts, like able wicked men, are hardly dealt with, when they have acquired an habit of domineering: the beginning of evil is therefore in every thing to be deciſively reſiſted. By degrees men grow more, and more bold, and unfeeling in the commiſſion of crimes, until they vindicate, and glory in their villanies: and when ſuch daring offenders are actuated by ambition, or revenge, they will not be reſtrained by the ties of relation, or friendſhip; nay, they will employ the guiſe, and the language of love, to obtain the opportunity of perpetrating the moſt horrid crimes: but the more of contrivance, or of diſſimulation there is connected with malice, the deeper is its malignity. The murderer may conceal, or proſper in his ways for a ſeaſon, and may elude or outbrave the juſtice of man: but let him not expect to eſcape the vengeance of God. Vain are earthly diſtinctions and preferments, which excite ſo much greater envy, and enmity, without affording any additional ſecurity to man's uncertain life: may we be ambitious of that honour, which cometh from God only! Great abilities, ſtrong attachment to the intereſts of the public, and eminent ſervices performed with firmneſs, prudence, and clemency, conſtitute a great, but not always a good man: ſuch a perſon, being the ſlave of one imperious luſt, may violate every moral obligation, in order to it's indulgence; though ſuch treachery, cruelty and injuſtice "be far from "him," in other parts of his conduct. Wiſdom is not reſtricted to rank, or ſex; and it conſiſts not in extenſive knowledge, or ingenious ſpeculations; but in underſtanding how to act, as circumſtances ariſe, in order that calamities may be averted, and benefits may be ſecured, perſonal, relative, and public. Contending parties would often be reconciled, if they properly underſtood one another; hence the benefit of a prudent, and impartial mediation: and the juſt puniſhment of one atrocious criminal is often mercy to great numbers. Thus the ſinner perſiſts in his rebellion, till, through the Saviour's mediation, he perceives that his offended Lord ſeeks not his deſtruction, but that of his ſins: then he becomes willing that they

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. A three years famine in the land, occaſioned by Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites, and removed by the execution of ſeven of his deſcendants, v. 1—9. *2d. Rizpah's attention to their dead bodies, and David's interment of them, with the bones of Saul, &c, v.* 10—14. *3d. The ſlaughter of ſome Philiſtine giants by David, and his ſervants, v.* 15—22.

THEN there was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD anſwered, *it is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody houſe, becauſe he ſlew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and ſaid unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Iſrael, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Iſrael had ſworn unto them: and Saul ſought to ſlay them, in his zeal to the children of Iſrael and Judah.)

3 Wherefore David ſaid unto the Gibeonites, What ſhall I do for you? and where-with ſhall I make the atonement, that ye may bleſs the inheritance of the LORD?

4 And the Gibeonites ſaid unto him, We will have no ſilver nor gold of Saul, nor of his houſe; neither for us ſhalt thou kill any man in Iſrael. And he ſaid, What ye ſhall ſay, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they anſwered the king, The man that conſumed us, and that deviſed againſt us, *that* we ſhould be deſtroyed from remaining in any of the coaſts of Iſrael,

6 Let ſeven men of his ſons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD did chooſe. And the king ſaid, I will give *them.*

7 But the king ſpared Mephiboſheth, the ſon of Jonathan, the ſon of Saul, becauſe of the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the ſon of Saul.

8 But the king took the two ſons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom ſhe bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephiboſheth; and

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ſhould be crucified, eſpecially, the ſtrongeſt and moſt domineering of them; and receiving pardon, and grace from God, he becomes peaceable, faithful, and uſeful in Iſrael.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—2. *There was*, &c.] This famine ſeems not to have been very grievous, and the ſcarcity of the firſt, and ſecond year was not greatly regarded: but when it continued the third year alſo, David underſtood that it was a national judgment for ſome particular iniquity, and enquired of God wherefore he thus contended with them. We do not read in the hiſtory of Saul concerning the tranſaction, which was declared to be the cauſe of this calamity: but it ſeems that Saul, in order to increaſe the poſſeſſions of the people, attempted to extirpate the Gibeonites, as being of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan; though they had ſubmitted to, and quietly ſerved the Iſraelites, and were protected by the public faith, and a ſolemn oath ratifying a covenant of peace with them on thoſe terms; (*Joſ.* c. ix.) Yet he did not attempt to extirpate the Amalekites, Philiſtines, and other hoſtile nations, whom God commanded him to deſtroy. But theſe were able and determined to reſiſt, and could not be ſubdued without apparent danger, and difficulty; and the inoffenſive Gibeonites might be oppreſſed with eaſe, and *apparent* ſafety: and perhaps he diſliked them the more, for being peculiarly devoted to the ſervice of the prieſts, and the ſanctuary. (1 *Sam.* c. xxii. v. 17—19.) It ſeems that Saul's relations were diſpoſed to cruelty, as well as he; and concurred in this bloodſhed; and many Iſraelites had willingly aſſiſted in the perſecution. The violation of the oath of God, and the treachery to and murder of the Gibeonites, formed therefore an enormous load of national guilt, which had never been expiated by the puniſhment of the guilty: and it pleaſed God in this manner, and ſo long after, to proceed againſt the nation for it; to ſhew them his abhorrence of ſuch crimes; to teach their rulers to keep at a diſtance from ſimilar offences themſelves, and to puniſh them in others; and to intimate that the chief puniſhment of ſin is after the death of the offender. And he informed David of the cauſe of the viſitation; that he might take proper meaſures for expiating the national guilt.

V. 3—6.] As the Lord accepted of the expiation here required, we may ſuppoſe, that both the enquiry of David, and the anſwer of the Gibeonites, were directed by ſome open, or ſecret intimation from him. They demanded not their own liberty, or any acceſſion of wealth, or the death of any other Iſraelite: but that in the character of the avengers of the blood of their brethren, they might be permitted to put to death ſeven of Saul's deſcendants; whom they would "hang up unto the Lord," as a ſacrifice to his juſtice, and an example to others not to injure or oppreſs them. They were willing to undertake the trouble, and to bear the odium of the execution: and would do it in Saul's own city, as a warning to thoſe, who had witneſſed, or aſſiſted in the oppreſſion.

V. 7—8. *Michal*, &c.] Theſe ſeem to have been the ſons of Merab, whom Michal adopted, and brought up as her own, (1 *Sam.* c. xviii. v. 19.) David conſented to this meaſure in obedience to God, and for the public welfare, and not out of private reſentment; and therefore did not violate his oath to Saul: but as he could ſpare one at leaſt of Saul's deſcendants, his covenant, and oath of *ſacred friendſhip* with Jonathan, required the preſervation of his ſon, in preference to all the reſt.

the five ſons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom ſhe brought up for Adriel the ſon of Barzillai the Meholathite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell *all* ſeven together, and were put to death in the days of harveſt, in the firſt *days*, in the beginning of barley harveſt.

10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took ſackcloth, and ſpread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harveſt until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and ſuffered neither the birds of the air to reſt on them by day, nor the beaſts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his ſon from the men of Jabeſh-gilead, which had ſtolen them from the ſtreet of Beth-ſhan, where the Philiſtines had hanged them, when the Philiſtines had ſlain Saul in Gilboa:

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his ſon; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his ſon buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the ſepulchre of Kiſh his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land.

15 Moreover the Philiſtines had yet war again with Iſrael; and David went down, and his ſervants with him, and fought againſt the Philiſtines: and David waxed faint.

16 And Iſhbi-benob, which *was* of the ſons of the giant, (the weight of whoſe ſpear *weighed* three hundred *ſhekels* of braſs in weight,) he being girded with a new *ſword*, thought to have ſlain David.

17 But Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah ſuccoured him, and ſmote the Philiſtine, and killed him. Then the men of David ſware unto him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Iſrael.

18 And it came to paſs after this, that there was again a battle with the Philiſtines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Huſhathite ſlew Saph, which *was* of the ſons of the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philiſtines, where Elhanan the ſon of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, ſlew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the ſtaff of whoſe ſpear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* ſtature, that had

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V. 9. *They hanged*, &c.] As they were hung up for an anathema, an accurſed thing, a national atonement to divine juſtice, they were to hang until ſome tokens of the Lord's reconciliation were afforded: and they were not within the meaning of the law againſt the bodies of malefactors, being left ſuſpended upon a tree all night: (*Deut.* c. xxi. v. 22, 23:) for that ſtatute meant, that they, who were put to death for breaking human laws, were not to be treated as "accurſed of God." And moreover the Lord may command that, in a particular caſe, which he prohibits in general: provided it be not intrinſically unjuſt. He might order the children to be put to death, for the parents crimes, though magiſtrates in general were forbidden to do it: becauſe all have deſerved worſe than temporal death at his hands, and there is an eternal ſtate of recompence for the manifeſtation of his juſtice. In like manner he might require, or allow of this treatment of theſe dead bodies, though in ſome reſpects contrary to the general rule.

V. 12—14. *And David went*, &c.] Though Rizpah improperly fed, and indulged her grief by this uſeleſs attention to the dead bodies; yet her caſe was truly pitiable: and David doubtleſs ſympathized with the bereaved and aged parent; and gladly embraced the opportunity, as ſoon as it was proper, of relieving her from her melancholy charge, by decently interring them, together with the bones of Saul and his other ſons: by this he avowed that he had not acted out of diſreſpect to Saul, or his family. The firſt rain, (ver. 10.) was a token of reconciliation; but after the expiation was finiſhed, the ſcarcity was removed in anſwer to prayer; and doubtleſs the Gibeonites joined, in ſeeking "this bleſſing for the inheritance of the "Lord," (v. 3.)

V. 15—23.] All theſe events ſeem to have occurred in the order here related, and towards the latter end of David's reign. The Philiſtines, though frequently vanquiſhed, were not totally ſubjugated: and the remains of the Anakims, of enormous ſize, and ſtrength, gave David, and his ſervants, not only an opportunity of ſignalizing their courage, but repeated proofs of the Lord's truth, and goodneſs. However David having been once in imminent danger, his life was deemed too valuable to Iſrael

on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAP. XXII.

Is nearly the same with the Eighteenth Psalm; and contains, 1st. The introduction, v. 1. 2d. David's professions of faith, and joy in God, v. 2, 3. 3d. His acknowledgment of the Lord's wonderful interpositions in his favour, v. 4—20. 4th. His avowal of his own integrity; and his declaration of the Lord's method of dealing with him, and with others, 21—28. 5th. Further celebrations of the praises of God for former mercies, and believing expectations of still, greater and more complete deliverances, &c. v. 29—51.

AND David spake unto the LORD the words of this song, in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand

to be any more exposed, now that his strength and activity began to fail him. For, as king, prophet, and psalmist, he was the "light of Israel," and a type of the light of the world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every affliction arises from sin, and should excite us to repentance and humiliation before God: but some troubles loudly proclaim that they were sent to bring sin to remembrance. In this case, we prolong our sufferings, by neglecting self-examination and prayer to the Lord, to shew us wherein we have offended him, if the cause be not plain to our own consciences: and however reluctant we may be, we must come to this work before we can expect relief in mercy. Whilst the grand outlines of the Lord's government are evidently righteous, some of his judgments are too deep for us: but faith believes those divine appointments to be just, which assume a different appearance, and waits a brighter day for the display of the glory of God in them. By the punishment of children for the sins of their parents, and of subjects for those of their princes, even after their death, he marks his abhorrence of destructive crimes, gives enormous wickedness a check, and teaches us to pray for our rulers, and to refuse to be instruments of their vices, and to deny our passions out of love to our offspring: and he will take care that no individual shall in the event have cause to complain of injustice. That our guilty land should experience successive years of plenty, calls for our admiring gratitude: and we need not wonder, if our misused abundance should be punished with as great a scarcity: yet how few are disposed to enquire of the Lord in such cases concerning the sinful cause; whilst the ingenuity of numbers is employed in discovering the second causes, by which he is pleased to work! The Lord will plead the cause of those, who cannot or will not avenge themselves: and the prayers of the poor, either for or against us, are of vast efficacy. The blood of nobles is an atonement scanty enough to expiate the guilt of the murder of the meanest person, that the wrath of God may be averted from the land: and violated oaths, and covenants will be severely punished, either in this world or the next, let the criminal be ever so highly exalted amongst his fellow creatures. Our zeal, either for the public good, or the supposed cause of religion, is naturally exercised in a perverse manner, and as if in contempt of God's commandments: but an apparently easy and safe exertion, which consists with our self-indulgence, and flatters our pride and lusts, is the temptation that prevails against us: unless the grace of God teach us a better way. Little do we know what may befal our children, or what anguish they may occasion us: but if we educate them in the fear of God, and commit them to his keeping, he will either exempt us from heavy trials about them, or support us under them. In every case resignation to the will of God is our duty and interest; and whatever cherishes inordinate grief, is sinful and tormenting, however specious it's aspect may be. All personal respects must yield to the commandment of God: yet in subordination to it a tribute of gratitude is due to the memory of our friends, and of respect to our civil governors. Whilst we are able, we ought to venture and labour for the public welfare: but we cannot exceed our appointed measure of service; and when bodily vigour fails, some are so useful by their counsels, prayers, and examples, that their lives should be taken care of, as a public blessing. Strength, and courage often increase men's pride; but more frequently hasten, than retard the stroke of death; whose unexpected approach, miserably causes all their vain thoughts to perish. The valour, and affection of friends should be acknowledged, and the strongest need the assistance of the more feeble: but the glory in every thing belongs to God. Through the atonement of Jesus, who performed all that was commanded, and through his intercession, the Lord is willingly entreated for sinners: and the believer, having peace with God, need not fear the stoutest foe, who defies his Israel; for though sometimes he be in apparent danger, he will at length be more than conqueror.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V 1. *In the day*, &c.] This song of praise was probably composed early in the reign of David, and soon after he was finally delivered from the persecuting rage of Saul. And perhaps we have it in this place, as it was found amongst those compositions, which he used in his private devotions: and in the book of Psalms, it stands as it was corrected and delivered to the chief singer, to be sung in the public service of the sanctuary; from time to time, upon occasion of recent deliverances, as well as in remembrance of former mercies. The variations are immaterial, and but few of them need be noted in the exposition of it. That, which is the first verse of this chapter, forms the title of the eighteenth psalm, with some alteration; the most re-

of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.

2 And he ſaid, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer;

3 The God of my rock, in him will I truſt: *he is* my ſhield, and the horn of my ſalvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou ſaveſt me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praiſed: ſo ſhall I be ſaved from mine enemies.

5 When the waves of death compaſſed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 The ſorrows of hell compaſſed me about; the ſnares of death prevented me;

7 In my diſtreſs I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears.

8 Then the earth ſhook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and ſhook, becauſe he was wroth.

9 There went up a ſmoke out of his noſtrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

10 He bowed the heavens alſo, and came down; and darkneſs *was* under his feet.

11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was ſeen upon the wings of the wind.

12 And he made darkneſs pavilions round about him, dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the ſkies.

13 Through the brightneſs before him were coals of fire kindled.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the moſt High uttered his voice.

15 And he ſent out arrows, and ſcattered them; lightning, and diſcomfited them.

16 And the channels of the ſea appeared, the foundations of the world were diſcovered,

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markable of which is, the inſertion of the words, "Th "ſervant of the Lord," in which the pſalmiſt deemed himſelf more honoured, than in being a renowned conqueror, and a very proſperous king. He had had many enemies, both amongſt his own people; and the ſurrounding nations; but Saul eſpecially is mentioned, being the moſt formidable, malicious, and unwearied of them. In the whole of this ſacred hymn, David ſeems principally to celebrate providential deliverances: yet he uſed language, which may well be accommodated to ſpiritual bleſſings. He appears alſo primarily to ſpeak of the Lord's dealings with himſelf; yet he was led by the prophetic ſpirit to ſpeak thoſe things, which may, with great propriety, be applied to the Redeemer; of whom he was an evident and remarkable type.

V. 2, 3. *The Lord is*, &c.] The eighteenth pſalm abruptly begins, "I will love thee, O Lord my ſtrength:" which words ſeem to have been added, when it was made public, as an expreſſion of David's exulting gratitude, in order to kindle the devotions of the people. The accumulation of metaphors, that is here uſed, as deſcriptive of David's expectations from God, which had been fully anſwered, denotes, that thoſe energetic figures of ſpeech, which commonly exceed the bounds of ſober truth, are all too feeble to expreſs what God is to, and doeth for his believing people. He is a rock, on which ſecurely to build their confidence; a refuge, in which to ſhelter themſelves from every foe, and in every trouble: a fortreſs, and a ſtrong tower, which are formed by human art and labour, to ſupply the want of, or give greater ſecurity to the natural fortifications of rocks and mountains: a ſhield to ward off every hoſtile aſſault; a horn wherewith to puſh, and proſtrate every aſſailant: for the Lord is a Deliverer, and a Saviour, and Salvation itſelf, from every evil and danger, to which the true believer is expoſed, who cannot but be ſafe and comfortable, when exerciſing faith in, and dependance on him. Several expreſſions, as "The God "of my rock," and "the horn of my ſalvation," ſeem to refer to the perſon of the Redeemer, God manifeſted in the fleſh, become the ſalvation of his people, and *in human nature* diſplaying divine power and authority in the redemption of ſinners, and the deſtruction of their enemies.

V. 5, 6.] Theſe verſes contain a figurative and poetical deſcription of the violence of David's enemies, and the imminent danger, to which he was expoſed. The fear and "ſorrows" of death ſeemed ready to ſwallow him up, as the waves of the ſea overwhelm thoſe, who are caſt into them: Multitudes of wicked men preſſed upon him with incumbent force, like the riſing floods, from which there appears no deliverance: nay, the temptations of ſatan, and the conſciouſneſs of his ſins, filled him with fears of wrath, and dreadful apprehenſions of future conſequences: and he felt like a malefactor bound for execution, whoſe fetters prevent him from attempting an eſcape, for whoſe body the grave hath certainly opened her mouth, and who is horribly alarmed, leſt the pit of hell ſhould ſwallow up his ſoul. In ſhort, he was like the helpleſs bird caught in the fowler's ſnare, and doomed to inevitable death. All this ſeems to be implied in the expreſſions here employed, ſome of which may hereafter be more particularly conſidered.

V. 7—16. *In my diſtreſs*, &c.] When every other hope failed him, the Pſalmiſt ſimply and earneſtly ſought help from God, whoſe manifeſted preſence, in the ſanctuary above the mercy-ſeat, repreſented his tabernacling in human nature as God our Saviour, as well as his exalted diſplay of his glorious preſence in his holy temple in heaven. Thither his prayers aſcended, and thence were they anſwered in a moſt effectual manner. As we are not informed, that the Lord delivered David by ſuch *external* diſplays as are here mentioned; it is ſuppoſed that he

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at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blaſt of the breath of his noſtrils.

17 He ſent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

18 He delivered me from my ſtrong enemy, *and* from them that hated me: for they were too ſtrong for me.

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the LORD was my ſtay.

20 He brought me forth alſo into a large place: he delivered me, becauſe he delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs: according to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he recompenſed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all his judgments *were* before me: and *as for* his ſtatutes, I did not depart from them.

24 I was alſo upright before him, and have kept myſelf from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD hath recompenſed me according to my righteouſneſs; according to my cleanneſs in his eye ſight.

26 With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thyſelf merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt ſhew thyſelf upright.

27 With the pure thou wilt ſhew thyſelf pure; and with the froward thou wilt ſhew thyſelf unſavoury.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt ſave: but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayeſt bring *them* down.

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adorned his ſacred poem with ſublime images, taken from the hiſtory of Iſrael in Egypt, at the Red ſea, at Mount Sinai, in the wilderneſs, and in the conqueſt of Canaan: and thereby intimated, that his deliverances were as honourable to God, as thoſe of old vouchſafed to his people, though effected in a different manner. The earthquake, the ſhaking as it were of the foundations of the heavens, the ſmoke, the fire, and the darkneſs, into which the Lord came down, and in which he majeſtically dwelt, with ſeveral other expreſſions, lead our thoughts to Mount Sinai. His riding upon a cherub, &c, denote the miniſtration of angels, that he employed, and the ſpeed with which he effected the deliverance of his ſervant: the coals of fire being kindled at his preſence, may indicate that the wrath of God arms all creatures againſt his enemies; or that it will conſume them, as fuel is conſumed by the fire; other circumſtances recal to our remembrance the dividing of the Red ſea, and of the river Jordan; the deſtruction of the Canaanites, when the hailſtones deſtroyed more than the ſword of Iſrael; and that of the Philiſtines, when the Lord thundered upon, and diſcomfited them, &c. And the whole declared that the indignation of the Lord againſt the enemies of his ſervant equalled his diſpleaſure againſt thoſe adverſaries of his people; and that their conſternation and deſtruction were no leſs, than theirs had been.

V. 17, 18.] David's deliverance from his ſtrongeſt enemy, when he was ready to devour him, by the providential interpoſition of God, was like ſending from heaven on purpoſe to take him out of great waters, into which he muſt otherwiſe have ſunk and periſhed: for his enemies were too ſtrong for him, and therefore his deliverance was evidently the work of God.

V. 19. *They prevented*, &c.] When David had framed any plan for ſecreting, or ſecuring himſelf in the day of his calamity, his enemies employed every method of treachery and malice to prevent his ſucceſs: thus the men of Keilah were ready to deliver him to Saul, and the Ziphites repeatedly informed of him: and therefore, notwithſtanding his own prudence and activity, he muſt have been cut off, if the Lord himſelf had not in a very remarkable manner protected him.

V. 20. *A large place*, &c.] He had been ſtraitened in dens and caves, as in a priſon, and was afraid to walk abroad in the open air: but now, through the Lord's goodneſs, he might walk at liberty, whitherſoever he would: or this may refer to the extent of his dominions, and the greatneſs of his proſperity, compared with his former difficulties. All this the Lord had done for him, "becauſe he "delighted in him" as the object of his ſpecial love, and a partaker of his ſanctifying grace; and in the general tenor of his conduct, a man "after his own heart."

V. 21—28.] In the ſeveral events of David's life, his character had been grievouſly aſperſed, and many heinous things laid to his charge: but his conduct had been upright and conſcientious in an uncommon degree. In all his perſecutions by Saul, he would not injure him or his party; and he embraced every occaſion to ſerve the cauſe of Iſrael, though rewarded by envy, treachery, and ingratitude: and in the other calamities, which he endured, he was hated without a cauſe, and was always ready to overcome evil with good. He perſevered under every diſcouragement to adhere to the worſhip of God, and out of the fear and love of his name, to act with equity, candour, and kindneſs to man: not renouncing his religion, or allowing himſelf in ſin; but making the commandments of God his rule, and the glory of God his aim, in the habitual courſe of his conduct, in an unreſerved and upright manner. This the heart-ſearching God could witneſs; and this his conſcience teſtified: and every providential deliverance was both a gracious recompence of, and a divine atteſtation to his innocence, from thoſe crimes of which his enemies accuſed him; and that his cauſe was more righteous than theirs. He mentioned particularly, "That he had kept "himſelf from his own iniquity;" from that ſin, or thoſe ſins, to which he was moſt ſtrongly and conſtantly tempted: and his care and watchfulneſs in this reſpect was a good evidence of his ſincerity. He had indeed committed many ſins, and ſome of them very grievous, and he was con-

29 For

29 For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkneſs.

30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

31 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect; the word of the LORD *is* tried: he *is* a buckler to all them that truſt in him.

32 For who *is* God, ſave the LORD? and who *is* a rock, ſave our God?

33 God *is* my ſtrength *and* power: and he maketh my way perfect.

34 He maketh my feet like hinds *feet*; and ſetteth me upon my high places.

35 He teacheth my hands to war; ſo that a bow of ſteel is broken by mine arms.

36 Thou haſt alſo given me the ſhield of thy ſalvation: and thy gentleneſs hath made me great.

37 Thou haſt enlarged my ſteps under me; ſo that my feet did not ſlip.

38 I have purſued mine enemies, and deſtroyed them; and turned not again until I had conſumed them.

39 And I have conſumed them, and wounded them, that they could not ariſe: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 For thou haſt girded me with ſtrength to battle: them that roſe up againſt me haſt thou ſubdued under me.

41 Thou haſt alſo given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might deſtroy them that hate me.

42 They looked, but *there was* none to ſave; *even* unto the LORD, but he anſwered them not.

43 Then did I beat them as ſmall as the

ſcious of manifold imperfections, (which the review of the book of pſalms will ſufficiently demonſtrate:) but he neither denied, excuſed, or perſiſted in them: on the contrary, he had been deeply humbled for, and repented of them; and was in that reſpect alſo conſcious of his uprightneſs in the ſight of God. This profeſſion therefore hath nothing to do with the manner, in which David was juſtified in the ſight of God, nor was it intended as a vindication of every part of his conduct; or a ſelf-confident boaſt, as if he needed not forgiveneſs: but it was the ſame conſciouſneſs of general integrity that every true believer poſſeſſes, and may on ſome occaſions avow, as an evidence of God's favour, and an anſwer to unmerited reproach, conſiſtent with the deepeſt humility, and the moſt entire dependance on the mercy and grace of God, through Jeſus Chriſt. And the gracious recompence, which David ſpake of, may be generally expected by thoſe, who act conſcientiouſly in the ſight of God, from right motives; for it is the Lord's method of dealing with the profeſſors of his truth: if he ſees them humble, ſincere, teachable, watchful, loving, pure, and obedient in their diſpoſition, aim, and general conduct; he will be merciful, and kind to them, and will fulfil his gracious promiſes, and communicate his holy conſolations to them: but if he ſees them diſſembling or perverſe, "he will wreſtle with them," as it may be tranſlated: eſpecially he will ſave thoſe who are poor in ſpirit, and ſuffer perſecution for his ſake; but with his wrath he will frown upon proud oppreſſors to bring them down.

V. 29, 30.] David's way was intricate, dangerous, and gloomy; but the preſence and favour of the Lord was a lamp unto him, marking out his path, and chearing him, whilſt he walked therein. By his help alſo he had ſingly broken through whole armies of his enemies; and leaped over every wall, that ſeemed to render his eſcape or his ſucceſs impracticable.

V. 31—33.] From experience he could teſtify that the Lord's word was a ſufficient ſecurity for every needed or expected deliverance: all the methods of his providence and grace had been in perfect wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs: none other could be in any degree depended on; for Jehovah is God alone: they who truſt in, and ſerve him, are perfectly ſafe: and whatever ſtedfaſtneſs and integrity he had before ſpoken of, as marked in his own conduct, the glory of them belonged unto God, by whoſe ſtrength he had been upheld, and preſerved from falling.

V. 34, 35. *Like hinds feet*, &c.] As theſe animals climb the craggy rocks, and ſtand firm upon the ſlippery ſummit of the precipice: ſo David had been upheld in the moſt dangerous and ſlippery paths by the Lord's providence and grace; and advanced to his preſent exalted ſtation: and his extraordinary ſkill, and ſtrength were to be aſcribed to the ſame cauſe.

V. 36.] *Thy gentleneſs*, &c.] The rebukes, corrections, and inſtructions, which the Lord intermixed with his merciful forgiveneſſes, encouragements, and deliverances, like the gentle tuition of a kind parent, tended to prepare David for, and to advance him to his eſtate of proſperity and authority.

V. 42. *Even unto the Lord*, &c.] In their extreme diſtreſs, David's enemies are repreſented as crying to the Lord for ſucceſs in their unrighteous cauſe, or deliverance from impending ruin; but not in repentance, faith, and integrity, and therefore in vain. Thus Saul enquired of the Lord, and he anſwered him not.

V. 43—46.] Theſe verſes may refer to David's victories over his rebellious countrymen, and the ſurrounding nations; and to the deſolations, that he made amongſt them: this he might conſider as the earneſt of ſtill more deciſive advantages; until the ſpirits of all his adverſaries ſhould fail, and their ſtrength decay; and the ſtrongeſt of them ſhould tremble even in their faſtneſſes and fortified cities, and ſurrender themſelves to him to be his ſervants upon the firſt ſummons. But here the Spirit of inſpiration ſeems eſpecially to have carried his mind forward to the glorious kingdom of the Redeemer, the deſtruction of all his ene-

duſt of the earth, I did ſtamp them as the mire of the ſtreet, *and* did ſpread them abroad.

44 Thou alſo haſt delivered me from the ſtrivings of my people, thou haſt kept me *to be* head of the heathen: a people *which* I knew not ſhall ſerve me.

45 Strangers ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto me: as ſoon as they hear, they ſhall be obedient unto me.

46 Strangers ſhall fade away, and they ſhall be afraid out of their cloſe places.

47 The LORD liveth; and bleſſed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my ſalvation.

48 It *is* God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou alſo haſt lifted me up on high above them that roſe up againſt me: thou haſt delivered me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will ſing praiſes unto thy name.

51 *He is* the tower of ſalvation for his king: and ſheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his ſeed for evermore.

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mies, and the prevalency of his cauſe on earth. And whilſt he concluded with the high praiſes of God, and exulting joy in him; he looked forward to his poſterity, and rejoiced in the proſpect of the bleſſings reſerved for them, not only as kings of Judah for many ſucceſſive generations; but alſo in Chriſt, the anointed King of the church and of the world, for evermore; yea, even for ever and ever.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we have received mercies from God, we ſhould, without delay, render him our tribute of praiſe and gratitude; and every recent favour ſhould be acknowledged with thankful remembrance of former deliverances: and ſignal interpoſitions of the Lord in our behalf ought to be publicly celebrated, with the beſt endowments that we poſſeſs. They, who know the Lord in his glorious perfections, and the various relations, in which he ſtands to his rational creatures; and eſpecially as a God of ſalvation; and who thereby learn to fear, truſt in, love, and ſerve him, chooſing his favour for their portion, and waiting for his mercy unto eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt, according to the covenant which he mediated, may expect from him every conceivable bleſſing. Nay, words can never expreſs, or creation afford objects ſufficient to repreſent all, that the Lord is, and will be to them, through time, and to eternity. The more they expect and aſk from him in humble faith, the more they ſhall receive, and every paſt experience ſhall encourage and dictate further ſupplications: and all this felicity is propoſed to every ſinner who deſires, and will apply for ſuch important bleſſings in the name of the exalted Redeemer. But though this ſecurity and felicity belong to all true believers; yet frequently both the events of Providence, and their inward experience ſeem to indicate the contrary. They are aſſailed by powerful enemies, and expoſed to manifold troubles and dangers from without: they are diſquieted by diſtreſſing fears, and terrors of conſcience from within: whilſt ſatan pours in his horrible ſuggeſtions to aggravate their diſtreſs, and to urge them to deſpair: thus they feel, as it were, the very pains of hell, and are ſo bound in the ſnares of death, that they are ready to give up their lives and ſouls for loſt. But in their extreme diſtreſs they will cry unto the Lord with the greater earneſtneſs, and he will ſupport them, and appear for their relief: and all their ſorrows and fears ſhall iſſue in the diſplay of the glory of God's perfections, and in the evidence of his ſpecial love to them: they ſhall all exerciſe and increaſe their grace, and prepare the way for their future comforts: and they ſhall all become the ſubject of triumphant praiſe and thankſgiving; and however painful now, they ſhall hereafter be delightful in the retroſpect. Therefore when temptations and tribulations abound, and our prayers are mingled with groans and fears, with diſmay, and anguiſh of ſpirit; let us not deſpond, but be of good courage; for we ſhall certainly bleſs God for them ere long, as many before us have done for ſimilar or ſeverer trials. Without renewing the miraculous diſplays, with which Iſrael of old was favoured, the true believer, comparing his dangers, fears, prayers, and deliverances, may be as ſenſibly aſſured, that the Lord hath wrought for him, as ever they were: and that he hath not only made his angels and other creatures the miniſters of good to him; but that his own hand hath effected the ſurpriſing change, which he hath experienced, in his condition, his character, his hopes, and his proſpects. Nor are the judgments of God leſs terrible now upon the enemies of his people, than they were, when the earth ſwallowed them up, the depths of the ſea overwhelmed them, or the fire of the Lord conſumed them: though they are leſs noticed, becauſe more ſpiritual, and chiefly executed in the eternal world. Still the whole creation fights againſt them, yea, his own almighty arm is lifted up to deſtroy *them*, as well as to deliver thoſe who truſt in him. Under reproaches, and perſecutions, the teſtimony of our conſcience to our integrity and ſincerity, in our religious profeſſion, will prove a ſingular ſupport: and it perfectly conſiſts with the deepeſt humility and the moſt ſimple dependance upon the Saviour, (2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 12:) Nor can we without it expect the witneſs of the comforting Spirit of God. We ſhould therefore exerciſe ourſelves to have a conſcience void of offence towards God and man: and, earneſtly ſeeking the ſupporting and ſanctifying grace of God, we ſhould ſteadily perſevere in his ways, notwithſtanding diſcouragements and temptations to ſeek relief by turning aſide. We muſt keep all God's ſtatutes and judgments before our eyes, (without excepting or deſpiſing one of them,) that we may regulate our conduct and converſation by them: and we muſt watch and pray, eſpecially againſt thoſe ſins which, by conſtitution, cuſtom, or circumſtances, may be called "our own ini-

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1st. David's last words, v. 1—7. 2d. The names, and exploits of his chief warriors, v. 8—39. (1 Chron. c. xi.)

NOW these *be* the last words of David: David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Is-

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quity." When we are betrayed into sin, we must, without delay, humble ourselves before God, and seek his pardoning mercy and recovering grace: and then even our falls, or our manifold infirmities, whilst we allow ourselves in no known sin, and neglect no known duty, shall not durably break our peace, nor interrupt this testimony of our conscience: and the Lord will plead our cause, and clear up our characters in due season: for he will deal with us according as we walk before him in humility and sincerity, or the contrary; both with respect to the dispensations of his providence, and the consolations of his Spirit. In the darkest seasons the Lord will guide and comfort those, who trust in and follow him: of the millions, who have tried his word, none ever complained that he was unfaithful: but all have been so assisted, that they have at length wondered at what the Lord had enabled them to do, as well as what he had done for them. Without him all other helpers are vain; with him they are needless, except he pleases to work by them, who could as readily work without them. All our talents and abilities are from him; and all our improvement of them. Whatever services we have performed, or however consistent our walk hath been, the will and the power were from God: he is our strength, who maketh our way perfect. Our ability and success in our spiritual warfare, our liberty from sin and satan, and enlargement of heart in God's service, and our preservation in the slippery paths of this ensnaring world, are causes of thankfulness to him, and not of glorying in ourselves. His gentle rebukes and corrections tend to real advancement, as much as our comforts and prosperity. Armed with the shield of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, the Christian soldier, being strong in the Lord, will pursue his victories, till he hath trodden upon the necks of all his enemies, and received the conqueror's crown. For the Lord liveth, as the God of strength and salvation, and will never leave us nor forsake us, till he hath brought us forth from all our enemies, and lifted us up on high, and above all, that rose up against us. In the prospect of that complete salvation, let us praise and rejoice in him upon the field of battle, surrounded with our enemies, and in the midst of our conflicts: and ere long we shall adore him, and sing praises to his name in more exalted strains, and surrounded with the millions of the redeemed, and innumerable multitudes of holy angels, who will triumph in our victories, and rejoice in our felicity. But we may here likewise discern the Redeemer's sufferings, and the glory which was to follow: for our sins he was encompassed with the waves of death, the floods of ungodly men, and the very sorrows of hell, in the garden, and on the cross. In his distress he called upon the Lord, and was heard, and was raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of glory in heaven: whilst his death was attended by the most stupendous displays of the divine abhorrence of their guilt, who crucified the Lord of glory. In him the Father delighted, his righteousness was perfect, yea, divine; he was justified from the blasphemies of his enemies by his resurrection and ascension. All power in heaven and earth are in his hands: all enemies shall be put under his feet, and he will destroy all those, that hate him. He hath been delivered from the strivings of the people, and made the Head of the heathen: he continually receives the submissions of those who hear of him, and willingly obey him: and many pretend submission, who have no love for him, out of fear of his power: but all opposition shall at length melt away before him, and all nations shall do him service. For he is the anointed King, whom the Father hath placed upon the throne of glory, and his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him: (*Dan.* c. vii. v. 27.) May we then accept of his salvation, and submit to his authority; may we now follow him, bearing our cross; that, when he shall appear for judgment, we also may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1, 2. *The last words*, &c.] As many things are after this recorded concerning David, it is not agreed in what sense these were his last words. Some suppose them to have been the last words, that he spake by inspiration, and, as it were, an appendix to the Psalms, which he composed. But perhaps he repeated them in his dying moments, as the expression of his faith and hope, and the source of his consolations. The last words of eminent persons have often been much attended to, and long remembered: these words of David were peculiarly worthy of regard, for the excellency of them; and shew, that when dying, this venerable servant of God was more than ever assured of the reality, and excellency of true religion; decided in his judgment concerning, and his choice of it's blessings; and animated with humble gratitude, and joyful expectation of his approaching felicity. In the introduction he mentioned his humble birth, and unexpected exaltation with thankfulness. God had raised him to a throne, and made him very successful and prosperous: but the most valued circumstance of his advancement was, that he was the anointed of God, to rule over his own people Jacob, and to be the type of the Messiah. Nor was he less thankful for being made "the sweet Psalmist "of Israel;" for being employed, and enabled to compose hymns of praise, and sacred poems, for the use of his people, and of the church of God in all future ages; and moreover to set them to music, and provide for the public performance of this delightful part of God's worship. And no wonder that the work was well done to the glory of God, and the edification, and comfort of his people, "for "the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was "in his tongue." This he declared with his dying lips,

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rael ſpake to me, He that ruleth over men *muſt be* juſt, ruling in the fear of God.

4 And *he ſhall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the ſun riſeth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender graſs *ſpringing* out of the earth by clear ſhining after rain.

5 Although my houſe *be* not ſo with God; yet he hath made with me an everlaſting

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that Iſrael, and that we, through ſucceſſive generations, might learn how to eſtimate that part of holy Scripture.

V. 3—5.] Some obſerve that there is in this paſſage a plain intimation of a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead. "The Spirit of the Lord;" "the God of Iſrael," and "the Rock of Iſrael," or the Son of God, the gracious Redeemer, the Rock of Salvation. Not only did the Spirit of the Lord ſpeak by the mouth of his ſervant David; but the Lord "ſpake *to him*;" and he hath here recorded his words, with his own meditations upon them. The former part may either be interpreted of David, or of Chriſt: ſhewing what he ought to be and do, and how to inſtruct his ſon Solomon, &c. and what the promiſed Saviour would be, and do. "He that ruleth over men" ſhould treat them as reaſonable creatures, and as his equals by nature; and therefore "muſt be juſt," oppreſſing, and injuring none, and by an equal adminiſtration of juſtice, reſtraining them from defrauding, or doing wrong to one another; and by his example and influence promoting general equity among the people: "ruling in "the fear of God," as his ſubject, and accountable to him for the authority deputed to him, and the uſe that he makes of it; obſerving his commandments, aiming at his acceptance, fearing his diſpleaſure, and ſubſerving the intereſts of true religion. Such rulers may reaſonably expect, that the Lord will proſper them, and afford them bleſſings, and comforts, like the exhilerating light of the unclouded morning ſun: whilſt their ſalutary regulations, diſcountenancing every ſpecies of evil, and protecting, and advancing every good thing, would diffuſe the moſt important advantages, temporal, and ſpiritual all around; as the riſing ſun diſpels the fogs, and damps, and brightens, and chears the face of nature: or as his clear ſhining after refreſhing ſhowers, rapidly promotes vegetation, and renders the earth luxuriantly fruitful. Upon the conſideration of theſe words of God to him, David turned his reflections home upon himſelf, and his family: and he could not but regret, that "his houſe was not ſo with God," as was therein deſcribed, and required. Not without much blame of his own neglect, and miſconduct, his family had been, and was much leſs religious, and proſperous, than might have been expected; and both he, and Iſrael had ſuffered many things in conſequence. Many grievous, and ſcandalous things bad occurred: matters were not yet as he could wiſh; and he had his fears concerning his deſcendants, who would ſucceed him in the kingdom. Perhaps by prophetic monition, he foreſaw, that they would not be happy themſelves, bleſſings to Iſrael, nor inſtruments of God's glory, in that meaſure, that he deſired. However he comforted himſelf, that "the Lord "had made with him an everlaſting covenant." God had covenanted to David that his family ſhould ſucceed him in the kingdom, (c. vii. *Pſalm* lxxxix:) but this was not "all his ſalvation, and all his deſire;" and could give him but an inferior conſolation in his dying moments, except as it referred to the promiſed ſeed, who was to deſcend from him. By the "everlaſting covenant made "with him" David doubtleſs principally intended the Covenant of Mercy, and Peace, which the Lord had made with him as a ſinner, who believed in the promiſed Saviour, who had embraced the proffered bleſſings, who had yielded up himſelf to the Lord, to be his redeemed ſervant, and had been made partaker of his ſanctifying grace, as the ſeal and pledge of it. This covenant was from everlaſting in the purpoſes of God, and ſhall be to everlaſting in the bleſſed effects of it. From age to age ſinners are admitted to ſhare it's benefits in the ſame free, and gracious manner: believers ſhall for ever enjoy it's bleſſings; and God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt ſhall for ever be glorified through it, in their ſalvation. This covenant is made with the ſurety, in behalf of thoſe, for whom he engaged, and all the bleſſings of it were purchaſed with his atoning blood, and freely beſtowed upon all, who believe in his name; and through him it is made with every one, who applies for it's bleſſings in the appointed way; and ſecures to him pardon, righteouſneſs, grace, and eternal life, as the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt. It is "ordered in all things, and ſure:" For in the perſon, undertaking, and mediation of the Saviour, effectual proviſion is made for the manifeſtation of the divine holineſs, the ſatisfaction of the divine juſtice, the honour of the divine law, and the diſcovery of the evil and deſert of ſin. Whilſt the mercy of God abounds in the forgiveneſs, and ſalvation of the chief of ſinners; there is an infinite fulneſs of grace, and all the bleſſings, that a ſinner can want, treaſured up in Chriſt, for the ſupply of thoſe, who ſeek for this ſalvation: a way opened to the mercy ſeat of God, in which they may come in humble confidence; ordinances appointed, through which theſe bleſſings are communicated, invitations to draw near, and exceeding great and precious promiſes to plead with God. All thoſe things, which in one reſpect are commanded, in another are alſo promiſed; and whilſt we pray for the performance of the promiſe, we are enabled to obey the command, to repent, to forſake ſin, to turn to God, and to walk in newneſs of life. Proviſion is in this covenant made for the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the recovery of thoſe, who have walked inconſiſtent with it, in the moſt diſgraceful manner: and yet no encouragement is given to commit ſin, but the moſt effectual methods are uſed to deter men from it, and conſtrain them to all holy obedience; (1 *John* c. ii. v. 1—3.) whilſt the believer perſeveres in love, and humble obedience, his evidence will be bright, and his comforts ſtrong; ſlackneſs will induce darkneſs, and diſcouragement: more direct offences will cauſe *fear* to poſſeſs the heart, and by inward terrors, and outward rebukes, and ſevere repeated corrections, the Lord will bring the back-ſlider home again with weeping, and ſupplication. In proportion as love declines, fear increaſes; "for God will put his fear into "his people's hearts, that they ſhall not depart from him;" (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 40.) As for that confidence of their good eſtate, and final ſalvation, which many poſſeſs upon

covenant,

covenant, ordered in all *things*, and ſure: for *this is* all my ſalvation, and all *my* deſire, although he make it not to grow.

6 But *the ſons* of Belial *ſhall be* all of them as thorns thruſt away, becauſe they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the men *that* ſhall touch them, muſt be fenced with iron and the ſtaff of a ſpear; and they ſhall be utterly burned with fire in the *ſame* place.

8 Theſe *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: the Tachmonite that ſat in the ſeat chief among the captains; the ſame *was* Adino the Eznite; *he lifted up his ſpear* againſt eight hundred, whom he ſlew at one time.

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evangelical principles, whilſt they take encouragement from them to continue in ſin; it is no better than a horrible deluſion of ſatan, and a deteſtable abuſe of the ſacred truths of God's word. But this covenant is "ordered in all "things, and ſure," in ſuch a manner, that no true believer can want wiſdom, grace, or ſtrength ſufficient for him, whatever his conflicts, temptations, or difficulties may be: and he ſhall either perſevere in an uniform courſe of holy obedience, or be brought to deep, and evident repentance of his miſconduct; and ſhall infallibly at length inherit eternal life. This covenant was "all David's "ſalvation;" for he was ſo well acquainted with the holy character, and law of God, and of the evil of ſin, and his own ſinfulneſs in every thing, that he knew he could not eſcape condemnation, according to the covenant of works: he perceived what was ſuitable to, and ſufficient for his caſe, in this ſalvation; and that it was framed to honour God; to humble and encourage the ſinner; to inſpire love, and gratitude; and to bring him to a holy, and happy diſpoſition of mind, and to prepare him for, and admit him to that ſtate of complete felicity, in which all the powers of the human ſoul ſhall be eternally ſatisfied. This covenant was therefore "all his deſire:" in compariſon with it, all earthly objects loſt their attractions; he was willing to renounce them, whilſt he lived, as far as required, for the ſake of the bleſſings of the covenant; his comfort, whilſt he poſſeſſed them, was derived from it, not from them; and he was willing to die and leave all elſe, that he might enjoy it's full felicity. (*Pſalm* lxxiii. v. 24—28.) This he was conſcious of: and yet he complained, that matters were not with his ſoul, any more than with his houſe, as he could wiſh, which ſeems the meaning of the words "although he make it not to grow." The grace of the covenant he had received, but it had not been made to increaſe, and flouriſh, in that meaſure, that he deſired. Still the prevalence of ſinful propenſities, and the weakneſs of his faith, hope, and love were his grief and burden: the Lord had not "made them to grow;" in which David never meant to impeach God's wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs; he had good reaſons for what he withheld, as well as for what he gave; and doubtleſs David would have allowed that his own inattention, and ſlackneſs in the uſe of appointed means were the criminal cauſe, that his grace had not more been made to grow. But the hope that it would ere long be perfected in glory animated, and encouraged him in his dying moments. However ſome interpret the paſſage of Jeſus Chriſt, almoſt excluſively, and it will in many things apply to him, the anointed king over Iſrael, and the ruler over all men, of whom David was a type. He is not only righteous, and requires righteouſneſs of his ſubjects; but he is the righteouſneſs, and ſanctification of all true believers: the promotion of the fear of God amongſt men is the grand deſign of his kingdom: his truth, and mercy, his favour, and grace, are the light, comfort, and cauſe of fruitfulneſs to all, who partake of them; and the bleſſings of his government are inexpreſſible, and ſhall be eternal. The kingdom of David's family was not ſo with God in any other period, as under this his covenanted ſeed: foreſeen by faith, he, as the ſurety of the everlaſting covenant, was all David's ſalvation, and deſire; though his coming was diſtant, and his cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs did not proſper in Iſrael, nor even in the prophet's own heart, as he moſt earneſtly deſired that they might.

V. 6, 7. *But the ſons*, &c.] They, who oppoſed David's authority, and that of his deſcendants, were worthleſs and troubleſome; and would be certainly rejected, and deſtroyed, as uſeleſs thorns are caſt into the fire. And thoſe ſons of Belial, who will not bear Chriſt's yoke, nor have him to reign over them, will be very injurious, and uneaſy to his people; but will bring upon themſelves certain deſtruction. They cannot indeed be taken with hands, or dealt with by thoſe, who are unarmed, and unprotected: But as in every government, there muſt be perſons, who poſſeſs power to apprehend, confine, and puniſh diſobedient, and rebellious people; in the ſame manner, as a man fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, can thruſt the thorns into the fire: ſo Chriſt is able to deſtroy out of his kingdom all his enemies, and will make them, as a "fiery oven in the day of his wrath:" for he can deal with thoſe, that to all others are utterly unmanageable. As the willing ſubjects of David proſpered, but his oppoſers were cruſhed, ſo ſhall it be with thoſe who ſubmit to, and thoſe, who reject the authority of the Redeemer.

V. 8. *Theſe are*, &c.] Under Joab the chief captain, theſe perſons were the chief officers in David's army: and as only thirty-ſix are named, Joab muſt be added to complete the thirty-ſeven mentioned in the laſt verſe. There were two triumvirates, and under them thirty ſubordinate officers, who commanded ſubdiviſions of the troops. Of ſeveral of them, and of their exploits we read nothing elſewhere: ſo that David's reign and actions were outwardly more ſplendid, than they appear in the hiſtory; which was intended for our edification, and not to gratify our curioſity. Adino the Tachmonite, called elſewhere (1 *Chron.* c. xi. v. 11;) Jaſhobeam the Hachmonite, is ſuppoſed to have had his title from his wiſdom, and he ordinarily preſided in councils of war. It is here ſaid that he ſlew 800 men, in Chronicles only 300 are mentioned: perhaps 300 were left dead on the ſpot, and the reſt died afterwards. There are ſeveral other variations in names, &c, in the parallel paſſage in Chronicles, and ſome others

9 And after him *was* Eleazar the ſon of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philiſtines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Iſrael were gone away.

10 He aroſe, and ſmote the Philiſtines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the ſword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to ſpoil.

11 And after him *was* Shammah the ſon of Agee the Hararite. And the Philiſtines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philiſtines.

12 But he ſtood in the midſt of the ground, and defended it, and ſlew the Philiſtines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harveſt time, unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philiſtines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David *was* then in an hold, and the garriſon of the Philiſtines *was* then *in* Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and ſaid, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the hoſt of the Philiſtines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheleſs he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

17 And he ſaid, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I ſhould do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. Theſe things did theſe three mighty men.

18 And Abiſhai, the brother of Joab, the ſon of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his ſpear againſt three hundred, *and* ſlew *them*, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not moſt honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *firſt* three.

20 And Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, the ſon of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he ſlew two lion-like men of Moab: he went down alſo and ſlew a lion in the midſt of a pit in time of ſnow:

21 And he ſlew an Egyptian, a goodly man:

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mentioned after theſe here named: but having no uſeful remarks to make on theſe variations, I ſhall take no further notice of them: and this may account for ſilence in ſeveral other places. The titles annexed ſeem to have generally been derived from the place of their birth, or abode.

V. 9, 10. *When they*, &c.] In the courage of faith, David, and theſe three officers defied the Philiſtines, when the reſt of his army had fled: and Eleazar greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the victory that the Lord wrought that day, having fought, till his hand, was ſo cramped with holding his ſword, that he could not readily leave go of it.

V. 13—17. *And three of*, &c.] Or the three chief over the thirty; that is over the captains above-mentioned. Theſe came to David, when he was perſecuted by Saul, and took ſhelter in the cave of Adullam. At that time a garriſon of Philiſtines occupied the entrance of Beth-lehem, the city of David. Some think that David by wiſhing for the water of the well of Beth-lehem, meant to ſtir up his whole band to attempt the diſpoſſeſſing of the garriſon; but not that his officers ſhould attack them alone. It is more probable, that being thirſty in hot weather, he eagerly deſired, and inconſiderately wiſhed to quench his thirſt at that well, the water being remarkably good: and that theſe brave men, to expreſs their peculiar attachment to him, broke ſword in hand through the Philiſtines, and returned to him with ſome of the water. But David was, upon recollection, aſhamed of his inordinate deſire, and raſh wiſh; and being unwilling to encourage ſuch deſperate attempts, he refuſed to drink of it, but poured it out as a drink-offering unto the Lord. For as it had been procured at the hazard of the lives of theſe brave officers; he would no more drink of it, than he would drink their blood; "far be it from me," ſaid he, or "my God forbid it me." This ſhewed David's tenderneſs of his ſoldiers, and his command over his own appetite, upon recollection, and when he ſaw occaſion. The word Beth-lehem ſignifies the houſe of bread; and the place was noted for excellent water: and there Chriſt the bread, and water of life was born; and we may ſafely long for, and venture all conſequences, in breaking through hoſts of enemies, to obtain this water of life and ſalvation.

V. 18—23.] We are not told on what occaſions, theſe exploits were performed, but they were done in faith, by the Lord's extraordinary aſſiſtance, and for the public good. Aſahel ſeems to have been the third, in this ſecond triumvirate, though mentioned as one of the thirty, over whom perhaps he preſided as captain; for there are thirty names beſides his. In the cloſe of the liſt we read the name of Uriah, and grieve to recollect the return, that he met with for his faithful ſervices.

man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

22 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,

26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,

27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,

28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,

29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,

30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,

31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,

32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,

33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite,

34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,

37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,

38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,

39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It hath been observed by those, who intimately converse with religious people, that they are uniformly most sensible of the reality, and importance of heavenly things, when they apprehend themselves to approach the eternal world: when their hearts are discouraged respecting their interest in these invisible blessings, their assured belief excites the most earnest, and distressing anxiety, lest they should come short of them. But when their hope abounds, they can exult, and triumph, though parting with all below, oppressed with pain, and sickness, and in the very agonies of death. And many have gone from the dying beds of godly persons, more convinced of the truth, and excellency of the gospel, by their last words, and behaviour, than by all the arguments, which have conclusively been adduced in proof thereof. When we approach this closing scene, it will be useful, and pleasant to consider what we originally were, and to enquire what the Lord hath done for us, in his providence, and by his grace. The more we have been conformed to the Saviour; the more we have lived in, and been treated by the world, as he was; the plainer it will be, that we belong to him. When our endowments have been employed in the service of the church of God; and our words, and works have been such, as evince, that we were led by, and brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, the review will be comfortable to us, and we shall give the glory to God. They are peculiarly useful to the cause of godliness, who stir up, and assist their brethren in the exercises of devotion; and the sweet work of praise, and thanksgiving, when it is conducted with solemnity, and springs from lively affections, is an anticipation of heavenly joy, a solace of earthly sorrows, a preparation for every service, most honourable to God, and calculated to give religion an attractive aspect. When *by us* the Lord excites others to their duty, he speaks *to us* likewise concerning our own; that we may exemplify by our conduct, in our proper station of life, the rules, that we propose to others. They who rule over men, must remember, that they are the subjects of God; and must therefore imitate his equity, maintain his cause, and seek his glory in the exercise of their delegated authority. Then will they be happy themselves, and blessings unto multitudes, who will bless God for them. The sons of Belial indeed will be the more enraged against their equitable administration; and will create disturbance, and vexation to them, and their subjects: but they should endeavour, and will in some measure be able to crush, and keep them under, though they cannot quite extirpate them. The best of men, reviewing their past conduct, and comparing it impartially with the rule of duty, will see great cause to be humbled for, and to mourn over their sins. Neither their hearts, or houses will be found what they ought to be. Their desire, aim, and prayer will be, that their families may be the accepted servants of God; and without this no outward prosperity will satisfy their minds: and if through their own negligence, or bad examples, they are otherwise, they will be the more earnest in prayer for them, that they may not perish with the sons of Belial, who reject the authority of the Lord. Yet in all their troubles, true believers, being conscious that they have fled for refuge to the hope, set before them in the gospel, and having experienced the power of renewing grace, may rejoice that the Lord hath made with them an everlasting covenant; and may meditate with comfort upon the rich provisions and firm security of it: and seeing all their salvation there treasured up, and find-

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. David causing the people to be numbered, contrary to the mind of Joab, v. 1—9. 2d. Made sensible of his guilt, and praying for mercy: Gad sent to require his choice of three sore judgments, and David's answer, v. 10—14. 3d. A pestilence wasting the people, but stayed through David's supplication, v. 15—17. 4th. David commanded to build an altar; his conference with Araunah, and his sacrifices, &c. v. 18—25.

AND again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved

ing all their desires centre, there they may chearfully bear up under all, that they feel, or fear, and look forward with joyful hope of complete deliverance. Yet, they who have received true grace from God, will long for more holiness: and they want evidence of their conversion, to whom remaining sin is no grief, and burden, and the slowness of their own growth in grace is not the chief complaint: though they still feel for the evils, which prevail in society, and in the church of God. The Lord dispenseth all his gifts, as he pleaseth, and there are various degrees of eminence, and usefulness amongst able, and serviceable men. Whether our talents therefore be more, or fewer, the honour of them belongeth to the Lord, and we ought to improve them for benefit to the church, and to the world, without envying, or despising others. In a good cause we should willingly venture, and endure hardship; even when deserted by those, who ought to help us; for the Lord will be our helper: and we should allow others sometimes to share the advantages, who would not expose themselves with us for the public good. The habit of hankering, and wishing for those things, which providence withholds, though natural to us, and often given way to by godly men, in an unguarded hour, is indeed rebellion against the Lord, shews the remaining sensuality, and selfishness of the heart, and leads to many snares, and evils: upon recollection, and experience, a wise man will be ashamed of this folly; and will abstain, not only from unlawful indulgences, but from those also, which are inexpedient, and might expose his brethren to temptation and danger. Were we but as attached to the person, and cause of the Captain of our salvation, and as much pleased to shew our love, and gratitude to him, and to do his will, and promote his honour; as some soldiers have been, to a beloved prince, or commander: how self-denying, and ready for every service, and suffering should we be, and how glad to spend, or to lay down our lives for his glory! And surely this is highly reasonable. Never ruler, or captain was of so excellent a character as ours: his commands are all righteous, and beneficial, his authority is an inexpressible blessing. The obligations, that he hath conferred upon, the love he bears to, and the honours that he hath prepared for, his meanest soldiers, and subjects, are beyond all computation, or conception. The blessings, which he freely bestows on us, were dearly purchased by him: and *for us, when rebels and enemies!* Precious in his sight is the death of his saints; and he will expose them to no danger, or loss, but for their good, and he will comfort them under, and finally deliver them from every suffering: and he will present them, and all their services, as an oblation to the glory of God, and in order to their eternal recompence. Under his command, and refreshed by the waters of life, that he bestows, we may venture to engage, yea defy every adversary, at the greatest disadvantage, and shall be able to turn their own arms upon them. Though not numbered with apostles, and prophets, our names, and services will be recorded in the book of life: and not a cup of cold water, given for his sake, shall be unrewarded: yea the willing mind to suffer for him, shall be accepted, as if we had actually shed our blood in his cause. But, as he hath shed his blood for sinners, let all beware of neglecting so great salvation: for the sons of Belial; especially the abusers of his truth, and the persecutors of his people, will be thrust away as thorns into the everlasting fire of hell.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *The anger*, &c.] This chapter is nearly the same with the twenty-first of the First Book of Chronicles, and the subject will be best understood by comparing the two narrations together: whatever therefore is requisite by way of annotation will be introduced in this place; but the practical observations will be confined to the chapter before us. A continual reference to the above-mentioned chapter will be made, without further notice being taken of it. The Israelites had offended the Lord by their ungrateful, and repeated rebellions against David; by their not duly profiting by the means, that were employed, for the revival of religion; and probably by that increase of pride, luxury, and ungodliness, which generally spring from great prosperity. They had just before in a three years famine experienced the effects of the Lord's displeasure, and it is likely had not profited by the correction: and therefore "again the "anger of the Lord was kindled against them:" and satan obtained permission, to provoke, or excite David to number Israel, and thus to execute his malice against them. From his suggestions, and David's remaining sinfulness this purpose immediately took its rise; and as it was "of the Lord" that David should be moved thereto; (in the same manner, that it was of him that the Canaanites should be hardened, or that Ahab should be deceived;) he withdrew every internal, or external restraint, and left him to follow his own counsels, and unintentionally to coincide with satan's machinations against Israel. Thus, by a manner of expression common in Scripture, the Lord is said to have moved David against them: though other scriptures prove, that the sinful disposition, and resolution could not be from God; though he both *permitted* them, and over-ruled them to accomplish his own wise, and righteous purposes. For the people's sin David was left to act very wrong, and in chastising him, their crimes received due punishment: which example throws much light upon the doctrine of God's providential government of the world, and will furnish us, in the proper place, with many practical instructions. But wherein consisted David's sin in numbering the people? It hath been alledged that it was a contempt of the promise, that they should be

David againſt them to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.

2 For the king ſaid to Joab the captain of the hoſt, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Iſrael, from Dan even to Beer-ſheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab ſaid unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many ſoever they be, an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may ſee *it:* but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4 Notwithſtanding, the king's word prevailed againſt Joab, and againſt the captains of the hoſt. And Joab and the captains of the hoſt went out from the preſence of the king to number the people of Iſrael.

5 And they paſſed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right ſide of the city that *lieth* in the midſt of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodſhi; and they came to Dan-jaan and about to Zidon,

7 And came to the ſtrong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the ſouth of Judah, *even* to Beer-ſheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land they came to Jeruſalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the ſum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Iſrael eight hundred thouſand valiant men that drew the ſword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thouſand men.

10 And David's heart ſmote him after that he had numbered the people. And David ſaid unto the LORD, I have ſinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beſeech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy ſervant; for I have done very fooliſhly.

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innumerable: and that they ought not to have been numbered without expreſs command, as in the days of Moſes: or that David neglected to collect the half ſhekel a piece, for the uſe of the ſanctuary, which ſhould have attended the numbering of them; and that he attempted to number thoſe, who were under twenty years of age; (1 *Chron.* c. xxvii. v. 23, 24.) But it ſeems evident that the pride of David's heart both induced him to this meaſure, and rendered it ſo very diſpleaſing to the Lord. Elated with the proſperity, and extent of his dominions, he wiſhed to know, and that others might know, the number of his ſubjects, who were capable of bearing arms: and this originated from an ambitious curioſity, and an oſtentatious vanity: and probably it was accompanied with a ſecret complacency in his own good conduct, under whoſe government Iſrael had attained this proſperity; and a too great dependance upon the number, and valour of his forces. As he was far advanced in life, he probably indulged the idea of having it ſaid, how populous, and flouriſhing a kingdom he had left to his poſterity. And it is evident that the chaſtiſement was eſpecially levelled againſt this pride, (2 *Chron.* c. xxxii. v. 25, 26. 31.) It had before wrought in his heart, but the Lord would have reſtrained it's effects, had he not ſeen it beſt to permit it to break forth, both for the people's puniſhment, and David's deeper humiliation: as a phyſician permits ſome diſorders to come forward to a criſis, that the cure may be radical; which is more deſirable, than only for a time to ſuſpend their effects.

V. 3. *And Joab ſaid,* &c.] Even this haughty wicked man readily perceived, that David's purpoſe aroſe from ambition, and was inconſiſtent with his character, and intereſt; and that if he perſevered to "delight in," or require ſuch a thing, "it would be a cauſe of treſpaſs," *i. e.* of guilt and puniſhment "to Iſrael." We muſt allow, that on this occaſion he ſpake with great reaſon, and temper, and expreſſed much affection both for his prince, and his country, and even aſſumed an appearance of piety: and David would have ſhewn his wiſdom, in yielding to his remonſtrances. Yet the king's word prevailed, but "it "was abominable to Joab;" and as he ſet about it reluctantly, we may conclude, that he did not perform it very exactly: much time was ſpent, and much trouble was occaſioned by this meaſure, without any proſpect of other advantage, than the gratification of a proud curioſity!

V. 9. *The ſum of,* &c.] Various methods have been taken to explain the difference in the numbers betwixt the two accounts, but nothing certain can be adduced upon the ſubject. To thoſe, concerned, it might be very intelligible; and to us it is no ways intereſting. As different perſons were employed, their accounts might vary: as Benjamin and Levi were not numbered, we may ſuppoſe, that in other reſpects, the accounts were inaccurate: and it might pleaſe God thus to order it, that David at laſt "might not "know the number of the people." It is remarkable that the Iſraelites had not multiplied in the poſſeſſion of Canaan, in any proportion to what they had done in their bondage in Egypt.

V. 10. *And David's heart,* &c.] David was not convinced of the evil of his conduct, until he received account of the numbers, that had been cenſed: and then "his "heart ſmote him," and he was ſenſible that he had diſpleaſed the Lord.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's ſeer, ſaying,

12 Go and ſay unto David, Thus ſaith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; chooſe thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and ſaid unto him, Shall ſeven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they purſue thee? or that there be three days peſtilence in thy land? now adviſe, and ſee what anſwer I ſhall return to him that ſent me.

14 And David ſaid unto Gad, I am in a great ſtrait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So the LORD ſent a peſtilence upon Iſrael from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-ſheba ſeventy thouſand men.

16 And when the angel ſtretched out his hand upon Jeruſalem to deſtroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and ſaid to the angel that deſtroyed the people, It is enough: ſtay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threſhing place of Araunah the Jebuſite.

17 And David ſpake unto the LORD when he ſaw the angel that ſmote the people, and ſaid, Lo, I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly: but theſe ſheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be againſt me, and againſt my father's houſe.

18 And Gad came that day to David, and ſaid unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD, in the threſhing floor of Araunah the Jebuſite.

19 And David, according to the ſaying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

V. 11. *For when*, &c.] Probably David had become ſenſible of his ſin, and had offered his humble confeſſion, and ſupplication before God over night, or in the night; previous to the meſſage, which Gad delivered to him in the morning; and then this ſhould be rendered, "and when David," &c. Gad was called David's ſeer, for he had long been employed as God's meſſenger to him, and David had paid great regard to his admonitions.

V. 12—14.] Though the Lord would pardon his ſervant's ſin, of which he deeply repented: yet, as it was a public offence, he would correct it in a public manner; by deſtroying David's ſubjects before his eyes. This would be diſtreſſing to him, both becauſe of his affection for them, and becauſe they ſuffered in conſequence of his pride, and ambition. Only three years of famine are propoſed in Chronicles: but ſuch variations frequently occur, and are probably owing to ſome trivial errors of the tranſcribers, in ſo long a courſe of years; eſpecially as *their numbers were diſtinguiſhed by marks*, which might eaſily be miſtaken. In this diſtreſſing difficulty, David preferred a judgment, which came immediately from God, whoſe mercies he knew to be very great; to thoſe wherein men were concerned, who would have triumphed in the miſeries of Iſrael, and been thereby hardened in their idolatry: and he choſe the peſtilence in preference to the famine; not only becauſe the land had already been viſited with one famine of three year's continuance, from which perhaps it was ſcarce recovered; and becauſe he, and his family would be as much expoſed to the peſtilence, as the pooreſt Iſraelite: but eſpecially that he might continue for a ſhorter time under the divine rebuke, however ſevere it was.

V. 15. *To the time appointed*, &c.] Either to the cloſe of the third day: or, as is moſt probable, only to the appointed hour of the evening ſacrifice on the firſt day; for "the Lord repented him of the evil," &c, which implies, that he did not proceed to the extent of the judgment denounced. Yet ſeventy thouſand died in the different parts of the land, in as few hours, as Joab had employed months in numbering the people; and this by the miniſtration of a ſingle angel!

V. 17. *When he ſaw*, &c.] Probably the angel had before been inviſible: but at length David, and the "elders of Iſrael, who were with him clothed in ſackcloth, "ſaw him ſtand between the earth, and the heaven, having "a drawn ſword in his hand," &c; an emblem of the divine juſtice about to be executed upon the city. David had before been humbled in the ſight of God, and had earneſtly interceded for the people; but this ſight affected him more than ever: and whilſt he and the elders proſtrated themſelves upon the ground, he poured out his ſoul before God in fervent prayer for the people, and eſpecially for Jeruſalem. He pleaded, that "he had com-"manded the people to be numbered," that "he had "ſinned, and done evil indeed:" and intreated that, as the whole blame belonged to him, ſo the indignation might ceaſe in the puniſhment of him, and his family. Indeed *his guilt occaſioned* the judgment; but the people were far from that innocency, which David ſuppoſed; for their wickedneſs was in reality the cauſe of the calamity. However his interceſſion prevailed: and it was doubtleſs in anſwer to his prayer, that the Lord ſaid to the deſtroying angel: "It is enough, ſtay now thine hand."

V. 18—25. *Of Araunah*, &c.] Araunah, or Ornan, though a Jebuſite by birth, ſeems to have been cordially attached to the intereſts of David, and of Iſrael: and was permitted to poſſeſs a threſhing floor, and ſome contiguous eſtate upon mount Zion. On that very ſpot the

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20 And Araunah looked, and ſaw the king and his ſervants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and bowed himſelf before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah ſaid, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his ſervant? and David ſaid, To buy the threſhing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be ſtayed from the people.

22 And Araunah ſaid unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *ſeemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt-ſacrifice, and threſhing inſtruments and *other* inſtruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All theſe *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah ſaid unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

24 And the king ſaid unto Araunah, Nay; but I will ſurely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth coſt me nothing. So David bought the threſhing floor and the oxen for fifty ſhekels of ſilver.

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angel of the Lord appeared, and thence ſpake to Gad, that he ſhould order David to build an altar there: whoſe ready obedience afforded Araunah an opportunity of ſhewing his veneration for the king, his affection for Iſrael, and his liberality in the ſervice of God, and for the public advantage. With a generoſity like that of a king, he was ready to give David the oxen, threſhing-floor, and all that appertained to it, that he might offer the appointed ſacrifices: but David did not deem it right to accept of them; and therefore gave him fifty ſhekels of ſilver, for the oxen, and the wood, &c: and ſix hundred ſhekels of gold for the ground. There the ſacrifices were offered, and the Lord "anſwered "by fire from heaven;" and the plague was ſtayed: and upon this ſpot, bought of a gentile, the temple was ſoon after built.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the righteous government of God, rulers, and their ſubjects have a reciprocal influence on each other: like the members in the human body, they are intereſted in each other's conduct, and welfare: and cannot ſin or ſuffer without mutually affecting one another. When the wickedneſs of nations provokes God, he leaves their princes to adopt pernicious meaſures, or to commit atrocious crimes, which bring calamities upon the people: and when the ruler commits iniquity, he is puniſhed, by the diminution of his power, and by witneſſing the diſtreſſes of his ſubjects. Inſtead therefore of mutually criminating each other under public calamities, however occaſioned, all parties ſhould be reminded to repent of their own ſins; and to practice their own duties. Princes ſhould hence be inſtructed, even for their own ſakes, to repreſs wickedneſs, and to promote righteouſneſs in their dominions, as well as to ſet a good example: and the people, for their own ſakes, ſhould concur in ſalutary meaſures, and pray continually for their rulers. The remains of ſin live, and will often revive in the beſt of men, as long, as they continue in this world: and the wiſeſt are ſoon induced to do very fooliſhly, when God leaves them to themſelves, and permits ſatan to tempt them: againſt this there is no ſecurity, except humble watchfulneſs and unceaſing prayer. Pride, in all its varied exerciſes, is the ſin of fallen man, as well as of fallen angels: it is the ſubſtance of ſpiritual wickedneſs, the rival, and enemy of the glory, and authority of God, and equally averſe to the ſubmiſſive obedience of the law, and the ſovereign grace of the goſpel. Yet this hateful evil mixes with, and defiles the beſt of our ſervices: thereby even the believer often ſacrilegiouſly aſſumes to himſelf the glory, which belongs to God; idolatrouſly confides in himſelf, or in ſome creature; oſtentatiouſly courts that admiration, and applauſe, of which the Lord alone is worthy; and becomes vain of thoſe endowments, or poſſeſſions, which he had no ſhare in procuring, and cannot ſecure for one hour. Thoſe, who are altogether proud, God will reſiſt, and fight againſt to their deſtruction: and he will detect and chaſtiſe the indulged pride of thoſe, who upon the whole are humbled before him as mean ſinful creatures, and yet inconſiſtently value, and prefer themſelves upon ſome incidental advantages. Through this hateful principle it comes to paſs, that we ſo readily can ſpy a mote in our brother's eye, and yet remain unconſcious of a beam in our own. And even ungodly men can diſcern thoſe evil tempers, and that unbecoming conduct in eminent believers, of which themſelves remain unconſcious. This ſhould warn Chriſtians to walk circumſpectly, leſt their miſtakes ſhould encourage others in unbelief, and ungodlineſs: and it is ſometimes a part of our chaſtiſement to be ſhamed, and rebuked by thoſe of very bad characters. Yet men, who have no real piety, may, on perſonal, and relative accounts, be ſincerely attached to the intereſts of true Chriſtians; and *in a certain way*, may have the cauſe of religion much at heart; as it happens to be connected with that of their party, or their friends: but they cannot love the diſciple ſimply becauſe he belongs to, loves, and bears the image of his maſter. However they may give good advice, ſupported by ſolid arguments: and they can ſometimes foreſee conſequences, which the believer ſuſpects not; and ſincerely endeavour to prevent them: and they can mingle their expoſtulations with affectionate good wiſhes, and a kind of prayers for their welfare, and ſucceſs. Theſe things do not prove a man to be a partaker of the grace of God; but they entitle him *ſo far* to the attention of godly perſons: and it is a ſhame for them to require, and delight in thoſe things, that ſuch men perceive to be wrong: and it is our own fault, if we do not in many ways profit by their advices, and cautions. But when authority prevails againſt reaſon, and truth, bad effects muſt follow: yet this is ſo common, that they do not often acquit themſelves honourably as profeſſors of godlineſs, who poſſeſs too much power, or influence. Men ſeldom accompliſh to good purpoſe thoſe ſervices, in

25 And

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was ſtayed from Iſrael.

which they reluctantly engage: and God ſeldom allows thoſe, whom he loves, the ſatisfactions, which they ſinfully covet. Where the grace of God poſſeſſes the heart, a man's conſcience, upon reflection, will reproach him with his tranſgreſſions: and he will not only be frighted, and diſtreſſed, as the hypocrite may often be; but he will be humbled before God, and with ingenuous confeſſions, and fervent prayers, will ſeek forgiveneſs from him, ſincerely purpoſing by his grace, no more to return to folly: and thus a man's pride will prove an occaſion of increaſing his humility. But when God corrects the tranſgreſſions of his people, by the anguiſh of their ſouls, in the great ſtraits, into which he brings them, he will make them taſte the bitterneſs of their ſins, and perceive his abhorrence of them. Whatever we idolize, or grow proud of, will generally be taken from us, or converted into a croſs: and no aggravation of affliction to generous minds, is more painful, than the reflection, that others, whom they love are ſmarting on their account. This is a common caſe in kingdoms, and in families: and perhaps, whilſt miniſters mourn over the ſtate of their congregations; they may ſometimes profitably enquire, whether their own ſupineneſs, pride, want of zeal, and ſimplicity; or their ſelf-indulgence, or conformity to the world, do not bring a ſecret blaſt upon their labours? (though more open evils do not bring a blot upon their profeſſion;) and whether the people's ſouls are not ſuffering for their correction; and to bring them to deeper humiliation, great fervency in prayer, and a more ſpiritual frame of mind, and devotedneſs to God? And ſurely we ſhould chooſe to be chaſtened in our own perſons, rather than that the bleſſing ſhould be withheld from our congregations: for though the Lord be righteous in theſe diſpenſations; yet the people have not deſerved *at our hands*, that we ſhould occaſion this evil to them. The grace of God teaches men to condemn themſelves, rather than others, and to ſeek their intereſts in many reſpects before their own: and earneſt prayers offered in this temper of mind, by thoſe who unreſervedly caſt themſelves upon the mercies of the Lord, are very prevalent. For he is ſlow to anger, and ready to forgive: he never fails of his promiſes, but readily recedes from his threatenings, in behalf of the humbled ſinner. If the power of an angel be ſo terrible, what is that of the Almighty Creator? and as *they* are ſo obedient to their Maker's word, and ſo prompt in executing his will; we ought carefully to imitate them, eſpecially in the delightful ſervice of miniſtring to the heirs of ſalvation. Death is continually, and in ſo many forms, and ſo ſuddenly deſtroying all around, that it is madneſs not to be expecting, and preparing for the cloſing ſcene: and through the great ſacrifice, and interceſſion of the Saviour, the vileſt ſinner may approach a reconciled God: and, being juſtified by faith in his blood, may become his ſervant, and child, and be made meet for his eternal kingdom. This meſſage, the miniſters of God propoſe to men, that they may adviſe, and conſider what anſwer, they will return to him, that ſent them; and their deſire is, that it may be, that they thankfully accept of this great ſalvation. And though, they are required to forſake ſin, to renounce the world, and its friendſhip, and to deny themſelves, if they would be Chriſt's diſciples: yet ſurely this doth not reduce them to a great ſtrait; for he will ſupply every want, make up every loſs, and give them an hundred fold more in this preſent time, for all that they part with for his ſake! Grace will teach men liberality, when the honour of God, and the good of his people require it: and extraordinary occaſions require extraordinary diſintereſtedneſs. But we ſhould not encroach upon thoſe, who are willing to give; or deſire a cheap religion. All we poſſeſs, and are, belongs to God, and we are to employ in his immediate ſervice, that meaſure of our time, and ſubſtance, which he requires: and whilſt we ſimply follow his directions, we ſhall ſpeedily obtain the comfort of his pardoning love, and be inſtrumental in averting his wrath from others alſo.

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